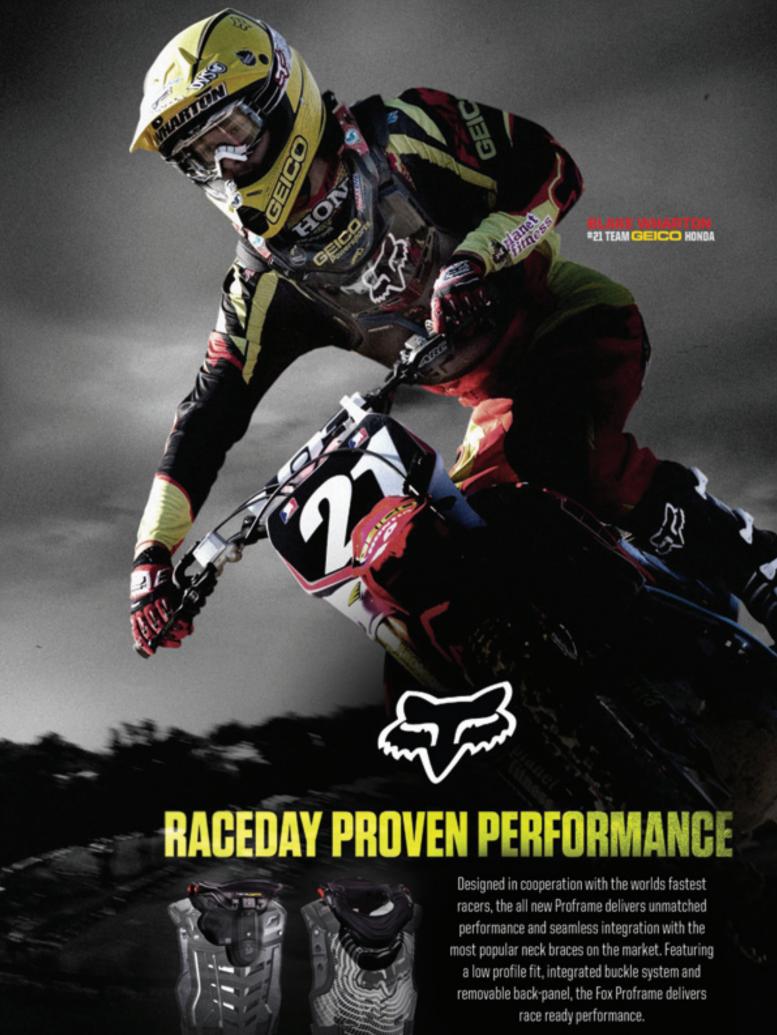


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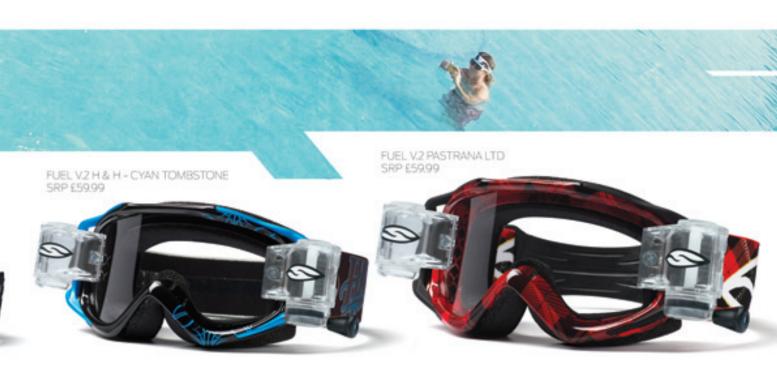
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or some it's the sight of a swallow dancing across the crisp evening sky, for others it's a splash of surprise colour as the first crocuses, daffodils and snowdrops burst into bloom. But from my lofty perch at DBR Towers, looking down onto Morecambe's main drag, it's the first fleeting glimpse of deliciously dimpled white flesh on an under-dressed woman that brings me the glad tidings. Oh yes, spring has finally sprung!

Of course, Morecambe being Morecambe you can tell just about everything you need to know about the time of year from dimpled flesh on an under-dressed woman. If it's white it's spring, lobster-red then it's summer, goose-pimpled means autumn and if the dimpled flesh is safely hidden away then chances are it's winter. Naturally, there are exceptions - year-round spray tans or sessions on the electric beach can throw up some confusion and dimpled flesh is always on display on Friday and Saturday nights no matter what the season. But, purely for the purpose of this column, at this moment in time I'm feeling slightly queasy at the sight of dimpled white flesh so the new season must finally be upon us.

I know, I know, I don't really need Morecambe's mini-skirted maidens to tell me it's time for the 2011 season to be kickstarted into life. As soon as we wrap up this very issue vou're holding in your hands and send it whistling down the wire to our printers, Sutty and I will be getting ready to hit the road for Little Silver and the opening round of the Maxxis. It's a bloody long way but not exactly hard to find - just keep heading south and when you get to the end of the M5 you're just about there.

Last year's opening round was pretty damn hardcore. Little Silver was chosen for its pillow-biting ability to soak up Mother Nature's worst excesses but even then the pretty much old-school Devon track ended up tougher than a Saturday night in Tripoli. The forecast for this weekend is much more positive than it was 12 months ago so hopefully we'll get some good weather, great racing and a healthy crowd of spectators.

This year's two main domestic championships the Maxxis and the Red Bull Pro Nationals - promise to be the best in a long time with a great mix of fast foreign imports, buck-wild throttle-happy youngsters and wily (but still super-quick) old pros all locking horns at a shedload of classic tracks. Faced with a 560-mile round trip the temptation to stay in bed on Sunday morning could be over-whelming – but this year's opener is a race not to be missed.

The week after that we'll be braving the elements at Back Cowm Quarry when Steve Ireland's WOR stages The Tough One. It's a new time of year and a new venue for the T1 but certainly not a new venue to me. I had my first trial at Back Cowm Quarry in March 1978 and for the next 10 years was a regular visitor to the guarry, high on the moors over-looking Rochdale. It's been a long time since I've been back so I'm looking forward to going and also looking forward to catching up with some old trials riding mates who I haven't seen for a long, long time.

The weekend after the Tough One it's time for our first visit of the year to Hawkstone Park for the big pre-season international and then the week after that it's all the way down to Kent for round two of the Maxxis series at the awesome Canada Heights circuit. That's March over with and then we barrel straight into April with the opening round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals at FatCat Moto Parc. It's a flat-out schedule for sure but I wouldn't have it any other way...

The excitement this month of the new season getting under way has, however, been off-set by the sad news that our Marketing Manager 'Slick' Rick Wilkinson is leaving us for a job dahn the Big Smoke. At the risk of getting all bromantic I know I speak for everyone at DBR when I say we'll all miss the Mancunian muppet loads and wish

him the very best of luck in his new career as a rent bo sorry Senior International Circulation Executive for IPC Media...





offer whole-hearted congratulations to British MXdN team member Dean Wilson who won his first ever AMA Supercross Lites Main Event in Atlanta, Georgia. The young Scot had a peach of a race to come through the pack and claim a solid victory ahead of his nemesis Justin Barcia. Wilson and Barcia now share the lead in the East Coast championship. Well in Deano!

Another Brit deserving a hearty pat on the back is Buildbase CCM's Tom Church who tied up both the British Open and SX1 championships in an exciting finale to the Future West championships held in Liverpool's Echo Arena. Berkshire lad Jack Brunell also tasted championship victory by snatching the title away from Ashley Greedy. All in all it's a great end to a great series

It's a mixed month for Tommy Searle who leads home the MX2 pack in his first international race of the year at Lacapelle Marival then finds out he probably won't be getting the \$18,000 No Fear owe him in the States as the company's filed for bankruptcy. Other familiar names on the creditors list include One Industries, Danny LaPorte, KBC and J-Law Racing. Don't despair if you're a big fan of the No Fear brand though because No Fear

Europe – which is a completely separate company - is alive and well and will be continuing to trade as normal.

In team news it appears that Nev Bradshaw's

tartin' Stateside if I may I'd like to first of all now a free agent after parting ways with MVR-D. Basically a few things changed for both myself and the guys at Motovision and the outcome is that it would have started to cost me money to go racing, says Nev. "I couldn't afford to do that so I've gone out and got a part-time job and I'll be starting up the two7two race academy in the summer. Everybody's been awesome and I'm still gonna race as a privateer this year in the MX1 class - hopefully I can do well.

> We briefly mentioned last month that there was an amount of kerfuffle surrounding the annual beach blast at Weston-super-Mare. At the moment it looks like Events22 will be hosting an event called the Events22 Weston Beach Enduro at the resort on October 7-9 which is something we can all look forward to. Check out the event's official website at www.e22westonbeachenduro.com for more details. There's no official word yet from Gareth Hockey on his four-round beach race series that he plans to launch this autumn but we'll keep you up to speed with that and any news just as soon as we get it.

As well as popping some smoking hot lingerie models on our TV screens each Christmas and making awesome butties, motocross fans in the North West have got plenty to thank Marks and Spencers for as soil extracted from the site of their new store in Ellesmere Port will be used to create a motocross park that's already been approved by the Cheshire West and Chester Council.

The BASE project will not only create another legal place to ride for existing enthusiasts but could help bring newcomers into the sport with their in-school reward scheme and school engagement programme. It's hoped the new park will open sometime in the spring.

A few dates for your diaries now... **March 13** is all about WOR's The Tough One at Back Cowm Quarry near Rochdale. Graham Jarvis, Wayne Braybrook and Kiwi Chris Birch head the pro entry at this most extreme of enduro events that has a whole new setting for 2011 and will offer a much more punishing ride than ever before. The race action kicks off at 9am for the Vets and Clubmen, the Gas Gas Speed Trial starts at 11:30am with the three-hour Main Event leaving the line at 1.30pm. Admission to this event costs a recession-busting £15 for adults, £10 for 7-14 year olds and f-all for anyone born after 2004. Bargain! If you're not sure where Back Cowm is chuck OL12 8LX into your satnav on **March 13** and go on a magical mystery tour – you won't be disappointed.

One week later and the big event bleeping away on the off-road radar is the Hawkstone International which unfortunately clashes with the second

weekend of British Sprint Enduro Championship action at Llangrove in Monmouth. After a slow start signin' 'em up the Hawkstone crew have really managed to attract some top names to this most pesky of pre-GP season shootouts including internationals Steve Ramon, Clement Desalle, Ken De Dycker, Tanel Leok and Seb Pourcel who'll be hoping to beat off the homeboys - Swordy, TC,

Ando, Woody, Smith and Irwin – in the MX1 division. In MX2 it really is a battle of the Brits as every top-level, 250F-ridin' UK passport holder (bar Canadian Dean Wilson \*wink\*) is signed up to do battle in the strenuous Salop sands. So we're talking Tommy Searle, Max Anstie, Jake Nicholls, EBB, Scott Elderfield and Steven Clarke who'll have their hands full with foreign invaders Valentin Teillet, Marcus Schiffer, Arnaud Tonus, Alexander Tonkov, Sean Mitchell and MVR-D's Mattis Karro.

Hawkstone's situated slap bang between the A49 and A53 around 10 miles north of Shrewsbury. Admission for the international costs £20 for grown-ups with under-14s getting a free day out.

We'll see you there then, eh?
After a slightly dodgy edition at Battersea Power
Station in 2010 the Red Bull X-Fighters won't be
returning to the UK in 2011 but don't worry about it







TC tries his hand at SX whatever next from the versatile Wiltshireman?

because something bigger and badder is headed to these shores on **July 2** and Cardiff's Millennium Stadium in particular.

With a rider roster that's gonna blow your mind the Monster Energy Extreme Freestylers Tour is set to go off big with fun-lovin' FMXers Nate Adams, Robbie Maddison, Adam Jones, Brian Deegan, Mike Mason, Libor Podmol, Brody Wilson, Seth Enslow and more all ready to throw down their best shizzle in a choreographed live show that you won't forget in a hurry. If you want to buy some tickets I really suggest you keep an eye on **www.extremefreestylers.com** because although the Millennium Stadium is a big old unit - just like yo mamma - this sucker's gonna sell out fast!

disappointed to see that the GOAT is now endorsing the Sbyke – **www.sbyke.com** – which is a half-BMX half-skeboard type contraction that you really wouldn't wanna be seen dead on. I hate to bag on Ricky because his level of determination and application make him a hero to millions of motocross fans but the Sbyke, really? What next, Jeremy McGrath endorsing a pogo-stick?



is still right on it n'all despite being old enough to be SX rookie Ken Roczen's dad – crazy huh? Anyway, as a great guy, awesome ambassador and superior spokesman, the bigwigs at MSR in the States and Off Road Action here in the UK - who import the full range of MSR goodies - are pleased as punch to have K-Dub representing them once more in 2011.

You might have noticed that Kevin's been rockin' some new duds in the more recent AMA races and that's because MSR have just launched their all-new and very awesome '12 Spring Line.

To celebrate the launch they've agreed to team up with us here at DBR and offer all of our lovely readers the chance to win a genuine set of Kevin's raced-in racewear.

Is it: A: Main Supply Route

B: Musty Socks Reek

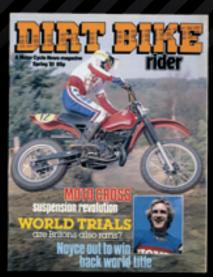
C: Malcolm Smith Racing

D: Minimum Security Requirements

When you've figured out the answer - for a clue check out www.msrmx.com/company - log on to www.dirtbikerider.com or use your smartphone to scan the QR code that'll take you swiftly to our home page, then follow the competition link, fill in the fields and hit transmit. The competition closes on April 7 and the sender of the first correct answer drawn at random will win Windham's wacewear (provided The Bear hasn't guzzled it all in the meantime). Wicked.



TRAWL THROUGH THE



Spring 1981:
This is it – number one, numero uno, where it all began! The first ever issue of DBR has Paul Hunt gracing the cover aboard a Swing-Link Yamaha as part of our 'suspension revolution' special. And while we're getting all technical, MX's most famous moustache – along with owner Roger Harvey - tests five of the new breed of water-cooled 125cc motocross machines. Elsewhere features on 'Belgian bombshells' Andre Malherbe, Georges Jobe and Harry Everts plus an interview with Bob Hannah help to make DBR #1 a stonking debut!



# June 1990:

A full 11 years before he finally realised his potential and won a world title, Jamie Dobb's our cover star as we celebrate 1990's awesome 250cc world championship chase. A youthful Jack Burnicle also catches up with the even more youthful Mark Eastwood and Paul Malin as the 'young lions' slug it out in their debut season of 500GPs and Rage reports on the ban on full-face helmets in youth MX.

To trawl through more back issues hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com or run your smartphone over the QR code on the opposite page and click on the digital vault button - new issues are constantly being added so keep checking back...





BIKE'S PREPPED, THE BODY'S RIPPED AND JAKE'S COUNTING DOWN THE DAYS UNTIL THE SEASON KICKS OFF...

everyone - how's it going? It's been another busy happening month for myself along with everyone else involved in the sport. Everything's really starting to kick off now which is cool and there's a fair bit of excitement about the upcoming series plus the current SX championship in America. Will Roczen be able to sustain throughout the year? I think it's going to be really tough for him to do so against a well-rested and prepared GP field. But he's always good for a surprise and I'm glad he's coming back to do the series after small talk of him wanting to stay in CA blah blah blah. In one respect who can blame the kid, how many of us at 16 had chicks with silicone bits chasing after us? Ha ha ha!

I'm excited about it all and enjoying my riding a lot on the new bike. I've clocked a good number of hours up on it now and also got a few in in some sloppy conditions since I've been back. Since I last wrote I competed in a cool race I mentioned last time called the Golden Nuggets in New Zealand - the weird name is because the track's on the edge of an old river bed where they've found a lot of gold so each podium trophy has a few flakes of gold in it which is pretty cool. I brought the winner's trophy back to sunny Suffolk which was nice.

We raced three 15-minute motos on both Saturday and Sunday. It was a cool event, really family-orientated and a rough track. A little like Brampton but a bit firmer. It was also cool to see the M2 division mixed with 250Fs and 250 two-strokes like they do in amateur racing in America. It's such a good idea and I wish it would take off over here because I love 250 smokers and because it allows privateers to still be competitive as it's cheaper for them to have fast bikes which they can do most of the work on themselves. Hope this happens one day...

From the race onwards JC and I really worked really hard on sharpening every part of our riding up and thanks to Mike Church again for pit-boarding us the whole time. Poor ol' Mike was juggling between two phones trying to time us both and pit-board too - he did a good job though. Tom would be proud! I was sad to leave NZ and the Coppins/Church family behind, they've been so good to me and I felt at home 24/7. I was sad to see the back of my bike too after looking after it so well and it being so good to me. Big thanks to KTM for helping me with the bike.

I flew back in normal seats which wasn't too smokey after being spoilt in first class on the way out especially when within a minute of sitting down I could smell some old munter's feet who must have been on some nature trek! I wasn't happy at the time but 30 hours or so later I was greeted by Blu at the airport and soon after that by my Jack Russell, Percy, in the car. I was happy but spaced right out by the flight so I went

out for a nice big roast the next day and rested up before testing the following day at my track. It was a bit too close for my liking but WP had been booked and I wasn't up for missing out on getting set up.

It was nice to see Wayne and Jeremy again after a few cold months, they have been working ridiculously hard as usual to keep the wheels rolling and building us bikes. First day of the test was good - I was still spaced out as I hadn't slept that well but man was it nice to ride my track. I hadn't ridden the MX track since the day I broke my leg (which is pretty good nowadays actually - a bit stiff when cold but not too bad) on November 4 and it hasn't been graded since it got built in April. It roughed up good with myself and team-mates Irwin and Booker thrashing around.

The second day was much better - I felt at home and the bike felt really good. The track was getting very rough and I felt fast. I did a lot of riding then did my first bit of boxing in a while that night which was fun - it took some getting into though. First few rounds I was a bit loose and got a few smacks which I wasn't too pumped on but then I woke up and started giving them back which felt good. Meanwhile, the Holeshot King was giving the mechanics and riders a boxing lesson and had them doing a bit with each other. They seemed to enjoy it and I got a serious sweat on after about 20 minutes of not leaving the ring.

Next day we left the house at 6am for FatCats near Doncaster - what a place that is! I'd read about it but didn't realise what a cool all-weather set-up they've got there. I was so tired and it rained all day so I sat in the van and said 'I will ride tomorrow, I need my rest'. Next day I rode every session possible and had a awesome day's riding in the Lommel-like sand up there Highly recommend that track to anyone.

I came home and Wayne and I tested a few more bits the next day and David Knight came up to try his bike before the Muntjac Enduro that Sunday. It was cool to have him up - he's a top bloke. I had the weekend completely off after a hectic week. My mates and I drove up and watched Knighter and the rest of the enduro boys ride on Sunday which was nice for a change and I wish I could have done it to be honest if I had the energy.

I'm sat here in our conservatory typing this at 10pm after two solid days riding and a long 360-mile round trip to north Lincolnshire to ride today at a cool track called Salters Lane. So it's a shower then bed for me, a nice rest tomorrow then just the finishing touches for the weekend and the first

round of the Maxxis championship. I'm up for it and I know I've worked so hard for it and I can't wait to get the racing under way...

Go Hard #45



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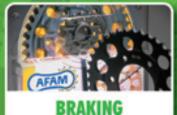




















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# blood iwert gerri

elcome, race fans, to your monthly Blood, Sweat and Gears column. As you read this a new race season will be blasting off. Those of you who have put in the winter training will already be reaping the early rewards. As you know, we've been busy all winter filming events around the country. But we still have a few more weeks before we're back on TV. Don't worry though — we'll keep you posted as soon as our new launch date is confirmed.

Some of the events we've been filming have proven to be real crackers. David Knight recently scored a fine win at Paul Edmondson's Extreme Enduro. These guys are totally nuts, constantly pushing themselves and their machines to the absolute limit. We also stopped off in London for a trip to the O2 Arena for the British SX championships. I don't know if it's because I'm getting old but I must say I could get used to this indoor racing – the conditions are far more pleasant and it made a nice change not to get thoroughly soaked for once!

I'm so pleased that the momentum from the opening round in Belfast managed to continue throughout the tournament. The London leg was a hotly contested event and it really is great to see the top British riders are taking this seriously. The fans that packed out the O2 were all treated to some top-quality, bar-banging races.

We also filmed the final round in Liverpool where a delighted Tom Church and Dave Thorpe celebrated a fantastic SX1 title win. Congratulations also to each of the class winners who will no doubt be mentioned elsewhere in the magazine. The future is looking bright for supercross in Britain.

When we do return to the air we'll be introducing a couple of new features in our continuing quest to make sure Blood Sweat and Gears remains essential viewing for fans of exciting off-road action. One of the things we'll be doing is following a young rider as he makes his move from the youth ranks into the pros. That rider is Ryan Williams who finished third in the Masters MXY2 class last year. He's already had two podiums this year at London and Liverpool and our cameras will track his progress throughout the remainder of the season.

We must just say a big thank you to the guys at Freestyle Extreme and FRO Systems who have agreed to help Ryan on his journey. We really do appreciate everything you guys are doing to help him on his way. I've also got to thank the team at Suzuki who have kindly donated a test bike. We'll be putting this bike into all different kinds of meetings from enduro to club motocross and even a few veteran races, all ridden by an average rider to give you a realistic idea of the bike's capabilities.

We can't wait to get back on your screens although I'm trying to make the most of these last few weeks of (relative) calm – once we start up properly we'll be working flat-out until late October. Hearing all the great feedback at events and on our Facebook page makes it all worthwhile and you know we wouldn't have it any other way!

Until next month, ride safe.

**BLOOD SWEAT & GEARS** will be back on the Extreme Sports Channel (Sky 419/Virgin 527) soon. Check listings for details.



# **CROCKSTAR**

# **EL KNACKERED!**

IT'S BEEN A BUSY – AND DISAPPOINTING – FEW WEEKS FOR EL GORDO WHO'S BEEN RUNNING HIS TRAINING CAMPS, DIALLING IN HIS NEW BIKE AND FAILING TO GET A RIDE AT THE SCENE OF HIS FIRST GP WIN...

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Sutty

'm writing this from my hotel room in Spain during the last few days of my final camp. It's night time and I'm exhausted from my work but DBR deadlines wait for no man and I gotta get down to business and type my tripe.

The riding has been awesome out here and I love my Suzuki. The track choice is vast and I have had many different types of terrain to challenge the new bike and get a good feel for the overall package. During the period of being here in Spain I have returned to the UK for two supercross events and also for a day's testing with the Relentless Suzuki by TAS team mechanic Paul Conway. The race bike the team has produced is excellent so far. We will continue to make improvements once I am home from my work in Spain.

When this issue of DBR hits the shops I will have returned home and be based back in the UK. Testing and development will begin for both rider and machine as race schedules and weather allows us to do so. I'm excited to get progress made from where I finished off in 2010. I think talk's cheap and I could continue to feed you with very convincing pre-race hype to fill the lines of this column but I'll do everyone a favour and save you from trawling through such a pointless exercise. I know what I've got, I know what I'm going to give — let's see where it gets me.

The London SX doesn't please me when I reflect on it. I had sufficient pace and strength although couldn't make a decent result. I was disappointed as it was my yellow debut. Liverpool was a bit better and I ended up on the podium with a third in the SX1 final.

This weekend coming is the opening race of the Maxxis British championship. I fly from Spain to the UK on Saturday and will be ready to tackle the track at Little Silver fresh on Sunday morning. I have memories from the same event in 2010 popping into my mind as I type this. If it goes as last year did then I'll be satisfied enough. Too much focus is put on the series opener and everyone is so jacked up about it.

Let's see how it goes, eh?

For some odd logic I seem to be following as I type this, I feel against discussing what I have been doing recently. Almost as if I'm trying to keep my cards close to my chest and be a stealth challenger. Then when you are all least expecting it I'll pull out my trump card – pow!

I discovered last week that round one of the Spanish MX Elite championship was at Talavera de la Reina. I entered the event as a wildcard, got my start permission and insurance from the MCUI, bought tyres, made numbers, borrowed tear-offs, bought an airbed and sleeping bags, drove the seven hours there from my camp, slept in the freezing cold van for a few cold hours and then woke up on Sunday morning to learn that they would only allow me to race if I'd been there on the Saturday to put the bike through Technical Control.

Talavera is where I won my first GP and it was always the opening GP of each season for a number of years. I was the last winner of a GP there. I have a certain connection to the place and was very, very excited to be returning there to race the track that brought me so much pleasure. Being told I couldn't race due to a formal rule was a kick in the stones after I had gone to so much effort to try to make it happen. I had hoped they would make an exception. Perhaps next year I'll get my way. Jonathan Barragan won both motos by the way.

I met an old friend of mine while I was there – Kari Tiainen. He is now running a WRC team for his famous Formula One buddy Kimi Raikkonen. ICE 1 Racing Team it's called and OMG have they got gazillions of dollars to spend or what. Kari is a multi world enduro champion and I think he will do a superb job of running the team.

Good luck to them.

Righto, it's bed time. My eyes are now stinging and my jaw's sore from yawning. Hopefully yours aren't too after reading this. Adios! El Gordo...



IT'S A TOUGH OLD SLOG AT THE OPENING ROUND OF THE BEC IN THETFORD'S WICKED WOODLAND...

Words and photo by Sutty

avid Knight kickstarts his defence of the British Enduro Championship in the best way possible by dominating the opening round of the 2011 series - the Muntjac. Traditionally one of the toughest events of the year - both physically and mentally – Knighter's the only Championship class rider to stay penalty-free on the going and sets the fastest time on all five tests as well to win by a massive margin.

"I'm really pleased with the way the event went," says DK. "It's always a tough one-day race and I normally find it hard because you can't attack the special tests properly because they're relatively short and mistakes are hard to recover from but I

really felt relaxed this year. The first test was slippery but I put in a good time that meant I had a decent lead straight away. After that I just made sure I didn't make any mistakes and towards the end of

the event I got a couple more good tests in."

Second overall and leading E2 pilot is Husaberg's four-popper pilot Alex Rockwell. A training partner of DK's on the Isle of Man, the former youth motocross champ is one of three riders to lose a minute on the going but is second fastest overall through the tests to claim the runner-up position. Rocky's so quick on the tests he misses winning the fourth outright by less than half-a-second – could that be the closest anyone gets to Knighter in the BEC all year?

After missing his minute by mere seconds at one of the check points E1/four-stroke winner Paul Edmondson must have been kicking himself because if it weren't for that small time-keeping error the three-time world champion would have finished a safe second overall on the day. Instead Fast Eddy has to be content with third overall and a class win.

Back on KTM machinery again after several years away, former GP motocross pilot Carl Nunn acquits himself well in the world of timecard enduros. The two-time British MX champ finishes fifth overall in the E2 category – and 15th overall – after losing a whopping five minutes on the going.

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WITH THE SX SEASON DONE AND DUSTED, STEVE TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO THE REAL JOB IN HAND – WINNING THE MAXXIS MX1 BRITISH TITLE...

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Sutty

he month started with the Future West supercross - it was the first one I'd done for a few years and I was really looking forward to the racing. The O2 Arena is impressive - it's so big with every restaurant you could imagine and lots of shopping opportunities to keep that special lady in your life happy.

I went down on the Friday morning as we were all hoping to have a go on the track before the Saturday. However, it was still being built so we only managed to ride a small part of it. I drove home that night as it's not too far for me. In the morning when I arrived the track was complete and looked good. But the evening did not go as planned and in the finals I had a crash when Shaun Simpson landed on me. I wasn't able to ride properly after that as I'd bruised my ribs. So I went away from the night disappointed. It was a shame but what a great turn-out of fans - it's good to see the amount of support we get as riders.

The next supercross was at Liverpool Arena. Once again the place was cool and I stayed up on the Thursday and Friday nights. On the Friday we managed to get a few practices in on the track. I felt strong from the start and with each heat race on the Saturday I could feel my riding improving and becoming faster. I was determined to make this a good night and once again was really looking forward to racing.

I led the British final from start to finish so that was a great confidence boost, especially as I hadn't been practising on any SX tracks beforehand. It was a great night for the team as Tom won the championship. In the Pro SX1 I came second as I messed up on a jump. Overall I was really pleased and glad that the team had us both on the podium that night.

I recently went to a charity ball where they were raising money for a children's hospice. We raised a lot of money with a sponsored cycle and that night even more was raised with a raffle and auction. It's so hard to understand what the couple who organised the fund-raiser must have gone through after losing their son. And to then

want to help other people in their situation... I must say it was an amazing night and I feel very lucky to be able to help and be a part of raising money for such a great cause. It really makes you realise how lucky you are.

The family are doing well. Ayrton is looking forward to coming this season as he's obsessed with bikes. He's grown up so fast and for me it's great as we're more like buddies - he thinks I'm super-cool so I'm making the most of that! And the pregnancy is going well - I saw the scan and it's mega so racing and family life are good. I just need lots of wins this year and it will be perfect.

I was invited to the rugby last week by Bath and England international Matt Banahan. He's a keen motocross fan and was at a couple of the British rounds last year watching. I got to know him through TC. As Matt lives around the Marshfield area he's pretty good mates with the MX boys up there. TC picked me up en-route to Twickenham and we arrived early to grab some food and soak up the atmosphere. We hooked up with Matt's brother Paul who was sinking a few pre-match beers. It was cool having Paul around as he was giving us a match run down on the French team and the rest of the time telling us how good Johnny Wilkinson really is.

The game was awesome, it was my first time at a rugby match and what a game to watch live. I could not believe how big and tall those guys are - I would rather case a triple than have one of them put me down! We stayed around after the match and had tea and sandwiches in the player's lounge. Matt popped in for a chat which was cool and then once the traffic died down TC and I headed home. Awesome day!

Well the British is now about to start and I cannot wait. I've felt strong on my bike over the last month and I'm 100 per cent confident I can win. Little Silver is the first on the calendar so

Braaaaap #2

bring it on!



# NAT'SBACK!

SHE'S BEEN OFF A BIKE FOR FIVE MONTHS WHILE SHE HEALS UP AND NOW REIGNING BRITISH LADIES' CHAMP NATALIE KANE'S GETTING READY FOR HER RACING RETURN...

Interview by  $Jenni\ Dick\ Photos\ by\ Sutty$ 

**DBR:** What's been happening since the end of last season?

NK: "After the last British women's race my doctor told me to rest the wrist injury I'd had most of the season and see how we went on. It wasn't getting better doing normal stuff like picking up my little sister and doing basic things at home so I went to see a specialist. They said I needed an operation and on December 14 I had surgery to repair the ligament in my wrist I'd torn off the bone which I'd originally broken in a practice crash last year.

"Also there were some other issues in there that hadn't shown up in the scans which the doctor, who was based in London, fixed for me. I then had physio after Christmas and that's pretty much been it – it's now the last week of February and I'm nearly done with physio and ready to ride."

**DBR:** So with a big break on your hands what did you get up to?

NK: "I got a big break – it's like five months since I rode – and I've not been up to much, just spending a lot of time with the family which has been good, especially as I'm moving away this year. I also got chance to catch up with friends and do stuff I haven't been able to do in a while since I'm away so much. Then I started training but to be honest I couldn't really do much upper body stuff because of the wrist."

DBR: What training have you been doing? NK: "I've concentrated on core training, cardio and legs but then I've also been backwards and forwards from Ireland to the physio who is in London so it was pretty hectic! Now I'm back home I've got a physio sorted and then I have a programme together to get going with."

**DBR:** We were going to ask you about your new bike and pre-season testing but I guess you don't know so much at the minute?

**NK:** "This year's bike is totally different from 2010 but I haven't ridden it yet. It's a fuel injection bike which is going to make the whole bike feel different when the throttle hits in and stuff. The power delivery is going to be different so it's going to take a bit of time to get used to. Also the KTM has changed quite a lot with the linkage system they now have and the frame is different.

"So basically it's a whole new bike and I've sat on one while they've been in the workshop but that's about all. To be honest I think it will suit me better because they are skinnier – last year's KTM was a lot different from the Suzuki I'd ridden before but the new bike should be a lot better for me and I really can't wait to get on and ride one now."

**DBR:** Going forward from now what's the plan as the season isn't far off?

NK: "My season starts on March 12 and then the next day I'm doing the Dutch championship race. Really, once I get on the bike I'll be concentrating on getting as much ride time as possible because that's where I'm going to be lacking the most. So it will be three to four times a week riding and working really hard with Andy my mechanic to get the bike set up as quick as possible.

"One of the major things that's changing this year is that I'll be moving to Holland as the cost of travel backwards and forwards to Ireland is expensive and we have to cut back. I'm lucky Roger [Magee] is continuing to support with the world championship – especially with how it's all over the place this year – and we agreed this would be the best way. There

are benefits to being in Holland as there are a lot more tracks there and it's much more central to the races as I'll also be competing in the Dutch and German women's championship this year.

"I'll be based near Lommel about half-an-hour from where the boys in the team are. We'll definitely be meeting up and also working with Harry Everts who is keen to help all the KTM riders. The tracks are also much cheaper than England and more accessible so it should help being there."

**DBR:** With the world championship starting in April what's your aim for this year?

NK: "Well we'll have to see how I'm getting on by then but the aim is definitely for top three in the championship this year and trying to win a few rounds. I should actually still be off the bike for another month but the doctor understands the sport so he's said I can ride soon if I'm careful. I can't undo the work he's done, it's just a bit stiff at the moment. So I just need to get up to speed as quick as possible and be safe during the start of the season."

DBR: Have you thought about going to race in America and are there any plans to try out the AMA series?

**NK:** "Roger's plan for me is to do all these races in Europe so there's not much time for America but definitely if I don't get hurt all being well – and Roger agrees – I plan to go to America to have a few races there."

**DBR:** What is a typical Natalie Kane week during the season?

NK: "In a normal week in the season I'd have a Monday off to get everything washed and sorted out from the weekend before. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday I'd be riding and training then I'd get Friday off. This year I'm mainly going for the riding and on Friday get ready for the races.

"Facebook is definitely going to get used up a lot this year too though with being away from home. My mum rings me for a good two hours all the time so I'm going to have to change a few things – get a Dutch phone or something to keep in contact with home. I am looking forward to getting going with it all though."

**DBR:** Who's your money on in the MX1 world championship?

NK: "Desalle is going to be quite good, Cairoli is always going to be up there but I think there may be some surprises in there too with riders like Shaun Simpson – especially towards the end of the year I think he can come good."

**DBR:** And in the MX2 world championship? **NK:** "Definitely Ken Roczen and I think Jake will go well this year too."

**DBR:** Who are going to be your biggest rivals in the women's world championship?

NK: "I'd say definitely Lancelot and Laier. Lancelot is going to be good as she's back on a Kawasaki and she's just much more comfortable on that bike. Laier has so much confidence from winning last year and from what I've heard she hasn't had a break and she's going real good too. But then when I get back to full fitness and riding the way I know I can ride I think I can be up there. I'm not saying I'm going to win but I don't think they will be a million miles away. Last year wasn't a good year for me with the injury and we still finished sixth but this year I have to put everything into it — as you can see the rides are quite hard to get."

DBR: Are there any new British ladies in the sport you think could go well in the UK?

NK: "Alix Dunlop was out last year with a knee injury but when I've been staying with her she's been going good. Her wee sister has just moved up and she has a good style, her speed isn't quite there yet but if it comes she could be quite good too. I meant to add also that Lancelot has a team-mate as well. I don't know who she is – no-one does – but she could be a surprise."

**DBR:** What do you think to the women's championship no longer running with the GPs? **NK:** "To be honest I can't understand why the

women have been replaced by the veterans. No disrespect to the vets out there but some of the women's races last year were the best. Out of the first five or six women anyone could win the race. Even if someone got the holeshot and got away the battle for second was still really good.

"When I've been at a race people just don't watch the veterans so much so I don't understand it and I don't understand why they've moved the women with the youth in Britain either. I definitely don't think we'll have half the women that were there last year in the world championship. When there was MX1 and MX2 it was easy for a team to bring an extra bike in the truck. I don't even know if people like Papenmeier will be there this year with the lack of funding. I'm just lucky I have Roger and I was actually quite surprised when they continued to support me in the world series. KTM have been really behind me to continue which is great too."

**DBR:** You raced a couple of the main British championship races last year with the men – any plans to do the same this year?

**NK:** "With all these other races we have planned I think I can fit in two of the main British championship races but it won't be the Desertmartin round which is a bit of a shame as it would be great to have a proper home race!"

DBR: Tell us about your team-mates..

NK: "Obviously since I've been injured I haven't seen them much but last year I spent a fair bit of time with Jake. He's really nice and if I was struggling he'd come and tell me his lines or to watch this part or that part and he's always been helpful. And Graeme as well at the races he was at he used to watch and say where I was quicker or could improve which was really nice.

"I haven't seen Graeme ride the 350 yet but I've been speaking to him and he feels quite comfortable on it – he's been testing in Spain where I should have been. I hope he gets a full season in this year and gets going well on it, I think he's definitely going to be doing good in the British although it's going to take some time to get there in the worlds as it's a big step up for him."

**DBR:** And finally, do you get a chance to do girly stuff like shopping etc?

NK: "To be honest my shopping usually involves checking out the Fox Racing website! But obviously during the time off I've caught up on a bit of shopping. Injury sucks but it does mean you get a chance to be with the family. Looks like from now I'll just be checking out the Fox site for new stuff!"





# **MAX POWER**

# **FRENCH FANCY!**

MAX HAS BEEN HANGING OUT IN MARSEILLE BUT DIDN'T GET TO HANG IT OUT AT VALENCE. STILL, ONCE THE SEASON GETS GOING HE'LL GET PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES...

Words by Max Anstie Photo by Nuno Laranjeira

etting back into the sand was really fun – after all the testing and motos my bike is feeling great and I'm ready to race. I had loads of fun in Belgium and even spent a few days at the RC car track just down the road from where I'm staying.

Lionel (my friend I'm staying with here) has also got a little team and we went to a local race. It was just like going to a Portsmouth club race and bought back loads of memories of when I was on a 50cc. It was really cool to go. The next day we were out at Lommel and Jeffrey showed up to have a play. We ended up putting a really good show on for all the spectators watching and started rubbing some plastic for five laps.

Then it was time to head down to Valence in the South of France. Unfortunately, it wasn't on the agenda for me to race so I had to watch but it was nice for me to see some of my Euro buddies. I did loads of interviews while I was there and helped a few kids out with some lines. So Valence was okay but it would have been better if I could have ridden!

The day after Valence I headed to the CLS Kawasaki photoshoot which was sweet! I did massive whips and scrubs so they got loads of cool pictures and then I had to slip on a Ben Townley jersey and hop on the big 450 to do some wheelies. Ben broke his jaw not too long ago so I had to do his poster picture! Ha ha ha – hope he likes it. After the pictures were all done we headed back to Marseille where we cleaned everything up and I went to bed.

I've been working really hard to stay on my programme while down here in Marseille but it's difficult because I'm rooming with the mechanics who are working until 1am on the bikes so they are up late and I've been finding it difficult to sleep. They eat pizza for breakfast as well! I'm trying hard though — I ride and I race because I want to win! That's it. I wake up at 5am so I can

work to be better every day.

Changing the subject now... I'm actually on my very last school book! When I finish this one I am completely done. In June when I get my cap and gown like in the movies I will put a pic in for my column!

The other day JJ, the owner of team CLS Kawasaki, actually got us VIP tickets to the Manchester United vs Marseille football match. It was an amazing atmosphere in the stadium but the score was 0-0 so that was the only rubbish thing.

For the last few days before heading down to our first international at Lacappelle I got a hotel room so I could do my own thing a bit more. To be honest after all the advice I got in the week leading up to it I felt like I was riding slower than normal but you know everything can't be perfect and the international races are just a good warm-up.

So I didn't feel best prepared and I proved to myself that my preparation does make a huge difference. Being organised and in control frees your mind and without my preparation I ended up on the floor again. I'm learning — even if it is the hard way. This week coming up I am getting my body ready to ride again and doing my homework for the next race in Sommieres.

Don't forget to message me on facebook.com/UNIONMAX or email me at devinmitchell@rocketmail.com if you want to join in on our Anstie Training School happening on April 16 in England near Andover. It's going to be a great day of working on all skills that you can then take home with you and work on yourself to improve your riding every time you go out. See you there!

Cheers and I'll talk to you next month...



# MARVINGUSQUIN THE FRENCH TWO-TIME WORLD CHAMP SPILLEZ LES BEANS ON

MOTOCROSS. SUPERCROSS AND LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM...

Q: Will your knee be better in time to allow you to ride in the Supercross Lites East division?

iam Stoodley, Andover

A: "No, it's not in our plan with the team Red Bull KTM - we prefer to focus on the outdoors nationals.

Q: Will the bike that you ride in the US be identical to your European model and if not what are the big differences?

## Simon Dewhurst, Mere

A: "The bike is not and is different to the one that I rode in Europe. Different because I ride in America with the new injection bike and in supercross with different suspension. I am happy to work with RG3 and before my injury we worked a lot on the KTM test track."

Q: How much of a disappointment was last year's MXdN for you - was it bike problems or were you carrying an injury?

# Robert Williams, Looe

A: "I was very disappointed for the French team firstly. I was very excited to be in America for the MXoN but for me and the Red Bull KTM team it was not a good weekend also. It was the second time for us to ride with the injection bike and we had some problems.'

Q: How difficult was it back in 2009 when you managed to win the championship after the legal battles with the NGS Honda team?

# Tracey Freeman, Hunstanton

A: "I was so excited to be on the Red Bull KTM bike that I had just one thing in my head - ride and win."

Q: How different is life in the US compared to France? aul Turpin, Godalming

A: "I like the life in America. The weather is almost perfect every day, the motocross racing is more famous compared to France and for my sport it's the perfect country. I have nice house, a big pick-up and now I just miss my bike."

Q: Do you prefer to ride MX or SX?

A: "I ride in supercross since 2000 when I was in 65cc and I love supercross but I like motocross too.'

Q: You came from finishing 14th in '08 to winning both the '09 and 2010 championships. What did you change in your programme to achieve this?

### Andy Whitelock, Prescot

A: "At the end of '08 I started to work with Yannig Kervella and it was first time for me to work hard with my physical condition. At the same time it was good for my mental conditioning and he taught me some technical aspects of riding. It was a big step for me, more professional."

Q: Was your contract in America dependent on you retaining your MX2 title last year?

**Dave Poynter, Harrow** 

A: "No it wasn't."

Q: Have you and Ken Roczen been hanging out in California together?

# **Hugh Mason**, Fleet

A: "We never ride together because he arrived in America when I was in France for the supercross of Bercy. But otherwise, sometimes I spend my time on the KTM test track when I go back to my house after the gym and we speak together with him and Andrew Short

Q: There are plenty of super-fast kids in the Lites class who also have the added advantage of knowing the tracks - what is your realistic goal for the outdoors series?

# Andy Quinn, Tottenham

A: "I don't really know. There are a lot of fast riders in this championship - it will be very intense and fast - but with my injury hopefully I will have time to be ready for the AMA championship."

Q: Is Roger De Coster's management style different to that of Pit and Stefan?

# Gareth Cooper, Matlock

A: "Every person is different I think. Roger is very calm,

very focussed. It's also different because in Europe I was in France with my trainer and my mechanic and here in America I live close to the KTM test track and Roger is coming to the track almost all the time with all the crew and the stuff."

Q: In Europe it's almost expected that KTM will win yet it's not the case in the US. Do you feel there is extra pressure on you to deliver immediate results?

# Simon Allgood, Worthing

A: "The Red Bull KTM team doesn't make me feel the pressure. This is our first year for all of us. I have to learn and they have to learn because it's different compared to Europe. But the team is already good, the bike is also good."

Q: What will you miss most about the world championships?

# Jeremy Burdiss, Topsham

A: "Some French friends, my French fans and the Red Bull KTM crew. I'm happy to keep with me my trainer and my mechanic for the AMA championship and my family is going to come from time to time in America."

Q: Did KTM let you keep your championship winning bikes?

Andrew Campbell, Haverhill

"Yes and I am very proud! Thanks to KTM."

Q: Do you see yourself ever coming back to Europe and the GPs or if all goes well would you like to spend the rest of your career racing in the US?

## lathan Luff, Manchester

A: "I really can't know. I feel good in America but you know, I arrived here only three months ago.

# **NEXTMONTH**

Got a question for the elder statesman of AMA SX? Fire it to us at dbrproprobe@googlemail.com and







# What do you get if you give the MCF's Matt Bates and Twisted 7's Jeff Perrett a pinch of salt and a twist of pepper? A pair of well seasoned ex pros, that's what!

**DBR:** Who would play you in a film of your life? JP: "I think Woody Harrelson would play the part well. He was awesome in Kingpin and with all the stupid scenarios and mess I've gotten into down the years I could see him up there on the big screen as me. MB: "Sacha Baron Cohen - although I'd have to chop his legs down a bit, at least it'd make me laugh!

DBR: Would you be able to check your own valve clearances?

JP: "You're joking, right? I can only just barely make my way around a two-stroke! I know what's wrong with a bike but wouldn't know how to solve the problem. I've been lucky to have my brother be my mechanic for most of my riding. I struggle with working the toaster at times so forget it!"

MB: "Not a chance. I'm from the two-stroke era where the hardest job was putting a power valve back together!'

DBR: Do you own a pair of pyjamas and if so what style?

JP: "You do realise you're asking a man, right? Not a chance.'

MB: "I do, my wife's bought me a few pairs but I've never worn them - that'd be like going to bed with your clothes on!'

DBR: What was the highlight of your career?

JP: "Just living the dream and doing GPs as a privateer for five years as a family. Results wise I guess finishing fifth in the British championship in 1998. Then there's stuff like Spode riding full chat through the pits at the Spanish GP in 1999 wearing only my boxers rolled up like a thong and my boots. The look on Joel Smets' face was priceless.

MB: "Not many really although I did beat Stefan Everts fair and square at the Coupe de l'avenir when we were both 18, although I was on a KX500 and he was on a 125! It's funny because every time I see him he mentions it - that's a nice memory he has considering he won 10 world championships but all he can really remember was little oi' me spanking him in Belgium!"

**DBR:** What car do you drive?

JP: "A Golf CL that I bought off a shifty Romanian guy for 400 nicker! She's sweet as a nut. However, a new van is imminent."

MB: "It's a proper old man's Audi that does everything for you other make you a sandwich when you drive. Everyone takes the piss out of me in it but I spend so much time in my car that it's got to have a

DBR: And if money were no object?

JP: "A 1972 gold Vauxhall Viva with tan leather interior, a convertible Ford Mustang, plenty more bikes and toys and my Twisted 7 team would be much bigger as well!" MB: "Roll's Royce - although I'd look like Paul Daniels driving a boat!'

DBR: Did you ever blame a poor result on a non-existent mechanical issue?

JP: "No, never. It just ain't worth it. If you mess up and ride bad then man-up and admit it. I always do my best to speak the truth."

MB: "No, my mechanic was too hard for that and would have killed me. Plus, I had enough injuries that I didn't need any excuses for poor results.

DBR: If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

JP: "Personality wise, absolutely nothing. I'm content with who I am and what I believe in and stand for. Physically a new left knee would be nice about now!" MB: "Be more patient and tolerant. I only every see things my way and if it can't be done yesterday then it's not worth doing!

DBR: If you could meet any person – dead or alive – who would it be?

JP: "This list could go on and on – there's so many – with the obvious one being my dad who died in '87. Another one that stands out in my head right now is Keith Moon from The Who - that man was seriously rock n' roll!"

MB: "My dad, I know that sounds soft and in a way is a bit of a cheat answer but my dad was a great bloke and never got to meet my wife or kids...

DBR: If you were shipwrecked on an island what three things would you want with you?

JP: "This is tough because you can't have internet or anything electrical, right? So a solar powered iPod, a beautiful woman and another beautiful woman! Does that count? Would they do my head in? Probably but it sounds pretty ideal sat here!'

MB: "My wife and my two kids - that's all I need. Although my dog would get pretty hungry being home alone and I ain't sure if he could pay the bills!

DBR: What's the most embarrassing thing you've done

JP: "I've done plenty of stupid things but I've never been embarrassed by them. I'm not one of those who doesn't know what they are doing when they are hammered anyway, I remember everything. To be honest, I'm more dangerous when I'm sober and besides my most embarrassing moment isn't for this publication.

MB: "Stole a golf buggy from a security bloke after a party at a festival. Then with three people in the back hanging on managed to hit a pretty big hole in the road and one of the girls - she was from Red Bull - flew off into a bush and really hurt herself. When drunk it was great but the sobering thought of what I did was pretty embarrassing the next day!

R: What's your most prized material possession? JP: "I'm more about memories and moments in time but I'll say my first place trophy for a two-day national I won in schoolboys when dad was ill in hospital. My Youthstream/FIM journalist of the year award from 2008 means a lot to me too. I was going through the worse time of my life when I won that and I'm proud of how I handled myself."

MB: "My first little boy's scan - I'd kill anyone who

DBR: Be honest, how often do you Google yourself? JP: "I think I've done it twice. I've only seen one other Jeff Perrett. He's a big American college football player."

MB: "I did it once about a year ago but there's two much more famous people called Matt Bates - one's a footballer and the other one is a speedway rider. I just did it again and the feckers are still more popular than me!'

**DBR:** Blonde or brunette?

JP: "I guess my track record suggests brunette but let's be honest can I afford to be that fussy? No! So hair is optional, a pulse is the only requirement... MB: "Blonde."

DBR: One thing about your riding style you'd like to improve?

JP: "Nothing really, I'm happy with the way I ride after 30 years at it and more than content with my career. I'm even happy with my spode technique but I'll never be as good as my mate Jon 'Paxo' Pitman - he's the Godfather! The best I've ever seen."

MB: "I'd like to have had longer legs so that poxy seat didn't keep hitting me up the backside - for all those short-arse riders out there, you know what I mean!"

R: What's your favourite film?

JP: "This is almost impossible to answer, again there are loads. I like comedies mostly so let's go with 'Caddyshack'. I reckon I recite lines from that almost every day with my mate Chip.'

MB: "Borat and any of the Bourne films - you can't beat Borat though, it's irony at its best!"

R: What's your most annoying habit?

JP: "I have this weird thing going on where I'll just smack myself in the head hard with the remote control while watching TV for no reason whatsoever!" MB: "My wife tells me I have quite a few but I reckon I'm almost perfect other than I'm pretty bad at phoning people back - I reckon that could be a pretty bad

DBR: What was the worst decision you made during

JP: "Racing! Nah, just kidding. I don't have regrets, you do what feels right at the time. I guess leaving the door open for Paxo when I passed him at Waggadon Farm and he took me out was a bad decision though. I'm mildly scarred both mentally and physically from that!" MB: "Selling UK Supercross to Clear Channel back in 2002. I've kicked myself quite a few times for doing that but try to always think about the positives that I got

**DBR:** Something about yourself that nobody else knows?

JP: "I can perform open heart surgery with a fish knife, I dated Megan Fox, I'm balding out of choice, I wrote the song that makes the whole world sing. I'm also a compulsive liar." MB: "That I was faster on a road race bike than I was on a motocross bike but chose the dirt (good move, eh?)...



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Way of Life!

# BLARNEY



Words by Stevie Mills Photo by Sutty

ell it's official – the 2011 motocross season will be well and truly started by the time you have your mitts on this latest Dirt Bike Rider extravaganza. Let's hope all those weeks pumping iron in the gym, running through the freezing cold wind and rain, clocking up mile after mile for your endurance training and all so you don't get your butt kicked on a

Saturday afternoon – pay off!

Just when you thought you were having it bad, take a moment to consider the misfortunes of the AJ Elite Bathroom Team having to tear themselves away from our adorable climate to tough it out training in California. Life's hard! Apart from riding most days in motocross paradise, the enthusiastic Paddys pretty much got to meet every rider on the AMA SX tour and there's even a rumour that a certain Jonny O'Brien blagged a ride on a factory rider's bike at one of the practice tracks.

Alas, rubbing shoulders with the stars is a world away for me but I got a bit of satisfaction from what Davy Gorman told me a few days after his return. "What a shock to the system to be back riding at home in the s\*\*t, then spending three hours washing your bike - we never needed to powerwash a bike in the entire two weeks in SoCal." Welcome home boys!

Donemana plays host to the traditional March Hare Motocross which is just about the toughest circuit in the country. A win at the season opener can be good for your confidence but as we have seen so many times it counts for very little come the Ulster championship opener on March 26 at Downpatrick.

Many will remember the disaster that was witnessed at Downpatrick last season - it was a clutch massacre with most Grade C riders resigned to spectator mode as our top riders

struggled with the horrendous conditions due to the rain. The word is that the track owners have invested a lot of time and money upgrading their venue, introducing rhythm sections in a bid to serve up a strong first event of the new season weather permitting this could be a fantastic start to the year.

Forget about the Yanks and their AMA SX series - it's all up for grabs on the Emerald Isle with new bikes, new teams and a whole lot of attitude about to be let loose on motocross tracks all over the island in 2011. I for one am busting to see McC re-enter the fray aboard an AJ Elite KTM 450. Big Phil has been pounding out the laps and is ready to take on all-comers although he keeps saying he is riding for fun.

Defending champion Robert Hamilton on his G&G Ross Yamaha is going to have to work hard this season if he's to retain his MX1 and MX2 crowns. Not taking anything away from Hammy, he won last season's titles by riding consistent and taking points while his main competition were sidelined with injury.

Multi Ulster and Irish champion Wayne Garrett has just returned from his Spanish training camp and is hot to trot aboard his TSR KTM. Wayne will ride under the Rock Star KTM awning in the British domestic series under the watchful eye of Darren Wilson. Wayne is determined to put his career back on track following an injury-plagued 2010 season, as is Watt/GOMX KTM runner Richard Bird who has moved his focus to the MX1 series aboard the 350 Katoom.

TM-mounted Stuart Edmonds will ride when his commitments in the UK allow but it will be down to the efforts of Team VMX KTM to uphold the honour of the Southern Centre. Team Owner

Graeme Vigors has recruited the talents of Ross Brown to partner Michael McMahon.

GC has combined running his successful Spanish training schools with preparations for another season in British MX1 and he managed to fit in the final two rounds of the British Supercross series in London and Liverpool where sadly he lost his British Open title to Tom Church.

Martin Barr was in action at the Valence international in France in preparation for a season of Maxxis and Red Bull Pro National action plus several GPs that Proppa.com KTM have pencilled in. Not sure just yet how many GPs they'll attend but fans can be sure to see Marty in action at the British GP at Matterley Basin in August.

The J&R motocross track is back in business and open every Saturday and Sunday weather permitting. All bikes will be checked for noise levels and Db Dawgs are required for all four-strokes.

As I write this we are five days away from round one of the Maxxis British MX series. I won't be there in person although I will be glued to my computer watching the lap by lap results and on the phone to my new Risk Racing Europe wing man Neil McKeown. The talented cameraman is going to attend most British races. looking after Risk Racing-supported athletes and capturing enough on-track footage to produce some fine race reports.

I'm betting Mr Lawless a pint of whatever he is drinking nowadays that we will have at least two top five results from the Irish Armada at the first British round with the possibility of a podium by either Graeme or Marty. And GC might just throw in a surprise ride n'all...

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# JONTY'S BOX



he last 10 days have been flat-out busy for me. Heading into Europe on two separate occasions to do a number of pre-season photoshoots and rider interviews, I've spent time catching up with and chatting to some of the biggest names in enduro sport. I'm talking about the likes of Knight, Blazusiak, Aubert, Renet, Mena, Salminen, Meo, Guillaume, Seistola

For this is an important time of year for everyone. Each getting ready in their own personal way, all are either testing or 'fair weather' riding or both. Some have refreshed motivation thanks to joining a new team, others relieved to be sticking with what they know. For some the start of the international season can't come soon enough.

Almost without exception – and completely unprompted by myself - just about all riders touched upon the subject of the Indoor Enduro World Championship, or the 60-minute world series as one rider jokingly referred to it. All were disappointed that the proposed five-round championship ended up cut to two rounds and even those that aren't overly enamoured by the indoor discipline were well aware that the premature end to the series wasn't a positive one for enduro sport in general.

What was interesting to hear was a large proportion of the riders saying the same things with many keen to understand exactly why the series flopped so spectacularly. With most wanting a decent indoor series, trying to work out experience - was too much like a long trials

how to fix things and what the best way forward might be regarding any future championships

It's clear that a few things need to change. Firstly, with current promoters RPM Racing rumoured to be handing back their responsibilities to the FIM a new promoter needs to be found – and fast. The FIM might take on that role themselves as they do with the Indoor Trials World Championship which would be fine. But with several riders questioning the thinking behind some of the 'rules' applied to this year's championship, confidence in the FIM's ability to move things forward and sort things out wasn't exactly overwhelming.

Just about all riders agreed that running the championship across the Christmas break didn't work. Most seemed to think that a more supercross-like schedule would be better with either three or four events taking place within a six-week period. Keeping things short, sharp and concise - and completed at least two weeks before the Christmas break - is what most see as one of the best ways forward.

Of the two events that did run it was generally considered that one was exactly what is needed and the other a good example of what's not wanted. The Genoa event was night and day better as far as most riders were concerned due to a faster, more flowing track around which riders could race. Barcelona by comparison and despite the organiser's considerable

section. Indoor enduro racing does need to include a multitude of different 'off-road' obstacles but without the racing element can become processional and uninteresting.

The length of races, the time between races and many other details need to be sorted out in order to deliver a better show but unless any and all future tracks offer enjoyable and exciting racing then there's little future for the sport. Having retired trials riders dominating the proceedings - which they certainly don't do in the EWC - shouldn't happen as it has done at some races. Equally, tracks that are little more than watered down supercross circuits aren't what's wanted either. Mixing the right amount of technical difficulty while also delivering tracks that can be raced around, just as a rider would with an outdoor special test, seems to be key to not only entertaining the spectators but also boosting rider numbers.

So where do things go from here? Has indoor enduro had its day in Europe? Will a stronger series be born from the mess that is the 2011 IEWC? Will the idea of an indoor championship simply get scrapped and replaced by a return to independently-promoted races?

Making things even more frustrating for many riders is the fact that the discipline that was born in Europe and which has hit a massive low-point is thriving in the States. In 2011 endurocross will be included in X Games for the first time ever while the regular endurocross series marches on successfully.



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# **TOO TALL**

Okay, I'll start with all the normal ass kissing stuff about how amazing your magazine is etc – I'm subscribed and it's a highlight of my month when I come in to find the mag on the doormat. So here's my point. You've done some tips on how to make a bike smaller but as I am 16 and 6ft 4in I could make use of some easy tips to make it bigger. Also I'm hoping to buy a new bike soon and could do with some advice on what one to get? I would like a 250F as new as possible but like many other teenagers I have little spare income. I would greatly appreciate some help with this...

If you're moving up to a 250F then you should find it plenty big enough for you Alex — unless you're strangely out of proportion and have got really long legs and a stumpy little body, a bit like Jeff Perrett only without his stumpy little legs. But if you really are out of proportion — or don't like to touch the ground with your feet — then you could always invest in a taller seat foam. Buying second-hand means you're much better off going for condition over make but used four-strokes can be a potential minefield so you need to have someone with you who knows what they're doing. Either than or go for a much simpler, safer 250 two-stroke.

# **MX JOURNO**

I'm an extremely keen reader of Dirt Bike Rider and I always buy the magazine. I'm in my first year of sixth form in my first year of A Levels and I think I might like to be a journalist like you guys. What is the best way to get into a job and a career path like yours?

Patrick, Watford

There's no simple way to get on the DBR career path Patrick – it just kinda happens. Sean partied away his A Level grades and accepted a job from his old man who was editor of TMX, then sorta worked his way up. SuttDawg – who was working as a car mechanic – just happened to be in the right place at the right time when DBR was hiring. Staff jobs as MX journos are rare as rocking horse winnets but get good grades in your A Levels, go to university and work hard and if an opportunity comes along you'll be in the best possible shape to grab it.

# **ASH IS BACK!**

Hey DBR, I thought I'd drop you a line and fire a warning shot across all my fellow two-stroke lovers' bows – Ash Harland is back! After dropping out of the British two-stroke champs in 2009 due to personal circumstances that lead through into 2010 I ended up riding a – shock horror – 450 four-stroke. Bit of a jump from the 125 but it was good experience.

But as with all four-strokes the buzz from winning a race on a four-stroke is nothing compared to crossing the line first on a 125 in an Open Expert category. So for this year after leaving the Moto Force-tuned 450 behind at the last winter series and buying a new bike I'm ready to go in 2011 and can't wait for the season to get under way...

For 2011 I'm armed with a new YZ125 with trick suspension courtesy of G Force/Moto Force suspension and tuning and clothing from Wulfsport. I'm feeling confident and can't wait to get the smell of two-stroke back into my system.

This year's schedule will consist of the MD Racing/UFO national two-stroke championship, the White Rose TDS two-stroke series and selected rounds of the Fuchs Silkolene two-stroke British championships with other club races to fill the gaps.

Ash, via email

Good to hear you're back on a stroker Ash – sounds like you're going to be raising hell up and down the country this season. Best of luck buddy and keep it pinned!

# WHERE IN WALES?

I'm 23 years old and looking to get into dirt bikes. I'm guessing that I would prefer to be out around mountains rather than on jumps but I don't know where to start. I live in Anglesey in North Wales and as far as I'm aware there aren't many places to go. Can you help me?

Craig, Anglesey

It was only a few months ago that the full DBR team – Sheriff Sean, Deputy Dawg and The Bear – were tearing it up around North Wales as guests of the awesome Ady Smith. If you're looking for a try before you buy off-road experience you won't do any better than Ady who can even provide machinery if needed. For more information on Ady's off-road schools call 01283 740147 or 07779 418336 or hook up to www.adysmith.co.uk and tell him that we sent you.

# **GO FOR IT!**

I have been riding my CRF450 for about six months now and I am loving every bit of the bike. I went from a 125 to a 450 and it was a big step but I'm glad I made it and I just wanted to say to any other riders out there who are thinking of making the same step to go for it – you will not regret it.

Mike, East Lothian

Horses for courses Mike. I'm not sure if you've heard the news up in Scotland yet but Ash Harland's gone the other way and switched back from a four-fiddy to a one-twenty-five. We sh\*t you not!



# LOVERPOOL!

All reet DBR! Love the mag etc etc etc and after spending a cracking evening in Liverpool I love Tom Church, Stephen Sword and CCM even more.

Who'd have ever believed that a CCM could win indoors? Growing up all I ever heard from my old man was Foamin' Bob this and Foamin' Bob that – now a CCM has won a supercross title the old bugger would turn in his grave. If he was actually dead. He's not but he damn near carked it with shock when I told him.

So well done Tom, Swordy, CCM and Future West for that matter for laying on a great night of racing.

Eric, Liverpool

You should go easy on your dad Eric if you want him to be around to see if Swordy or TC can win the British title outdoors as well – and they're both in with a very real shot...

# WHERE TO RIDE?

I work for the St George Youth Project based in Halifax and a number of the young people I work with are interested in off-road motorbiking but know of nowhere to go to be able to take part in their favourite pastime without breaking the law. I was hoping you could supply us with the names of some venues which would be accessible from Halifax.

lan, Halifax

You're a little bit stuck in the middle lan between three tracks we can personally vouch for – head west about 50 miles and there's **Preston Docks MX (07710 523430)**, head south east about the same distance and you've got **DMP at Finningley (01302 772092)** and a little further on **FatCats Motoparc (07990 514509)**. Good luck...



# GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? WELL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at *rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk*All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address.
Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!

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# HIT N'SWISS!

JUST TWO YEARS AGO ARNAUD TONUS WAS GETTING READY FOR HIS FIRST EVER GP - NOW HE'S GOT EQUAL BILLING ALONGSIDE THE REIGNING MAXXIS BRITISH MX2 CHAMP IN THE UK'S MOST SUCCESSFUL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM...

Words and photos by Nuno Laranjeira

mong the psyched-up MX2 kids Arnaud Tonus often stands out by looking almost too calm on the startgate. Surrounded by hyper young pilots, mentally wiring themselves to race, he seems so relaxed. Under control. It's a serenity you would maybe expect to see in a more mature, experienced rider so it's all the more remarkable to discover that 2011 will be only the 19-year-old Swiss racer's third season in GPs.

But Arnaud comes from a family with a long association with high-pressure, top-flight sport. In a sense once he decided on his sport he was destined to race GPs, genetically suited to life as a professional motocross rider. It's in his guts. And it's also in his guts that he needs to work to succeed, that gain doesn't come without pain. It's a valuable lesson he's learned from his family and one that's stood him in good stead in his short, fast-tracked career.

Tonus went through an ultra-quick progression - his first GP season was in 2009 when he piloted a KTM to 16th in the MX2 series. The following year he was signed to race alongside Ken Roczen on a <u>Teka</u> Suzuki and he leap-frogged up to seventh in a season that ended on a high with his first podium at the Italian finale.

For 2011 he'll be racing for Steve Dixon's Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha team so we headed off to Valence in France to have a chat with the rising Swiss star ahead of his British championship debut at Little Silver...

**DBR:** The Meyrinos Motocross Club in Geneva is where it all starts for the aspiring stars of Swiss MX..

AT: "The Meyrinos has always been my club since I was a child, it's where I began learning how to ride motocross when I was four years old. It's very close to where I live so I always used their MX track and also when I was practising SX on the 85cc. But I began to ride much more in France as it is also close to Geneva and the level of racing there was always higher than in Switzerland so it was a logical decision to spend more time doing the French championship. They have great tracks so I learned a lot doing those races - I went there regularly for at least five years since I started on the 65cc."

DBR: How is the Swiss MX scene - are there

AT: "It's not popular at all – it's really far from the recognition other sports have as there is no media covering it on a regular basis. It's really difficult to get people to know you this

way, they don't even hear about the sport let alone know the riders they have. MotoGP and road racing are popular because Thomas Luthi was 125cc world champion in 2005 but motocross is the opposite."

DBR: And your family, how much does their support mean to you?

AT: "My family has been backing me since forever - it's due to them that I find myself here. We've always been very close - my mom and dad follow me to every practice and race ever since I started. My sister has been a lot with me also. We get in the camper and just think of it as a bit of holiday every weekend with all the travelling, it's really a passion for all of us."

DBR: We know that Charly Tonus - besides being your dad, coach and counsellor - was also one of Switzerland's best riders... AT: "He was a good rider – he just started a bit later than usual but he still became champion in Switzerland and got some good results at the GPs. He was generally in the top 15 although on some occasions he got in the top 10 and that was pretty good for a Swiss rider in the past. When I was one month old I was already going to the races with my mom. Motorcycle racing became my passion really quick, I just knew I was going to do this for the rest of my life. All the signs were there already and I had my first race when I was seven.'

DBR: There's a strong sporting tradition among the Tonus family...

AT: "My uncle Jean-Marc was a full-contact [martial arts] world champion - a great sportsman - and even my grandfather was a road cycling champion so the Tonus family has always had a strong connection with sports. When I started riding the support I got from all the family was immediate. My dad has been totally focused on me when I became professional he even sold the business he had to spend more of his time dedicated to my career. What more can I ask?"

DBR: You finished 2010 on a high with a podium at the last GP of the season in Italy and then you won the Berck sur Mer beach race beating Stefan Everts...

AT: "It was like a dream really. I hadn't been riding on the sand that much before it so I wasn't well prepared for it. Before that race I was only practising supercross to be ready for Bercy. I was riding very relaxed on my GP bike just trying to have some fun and it ended up that way. Good stuff happens!" >>



DBR: How much have you improved in the sand? In the past you've struggled so how did you turn things around? Was it the experience acquired with Suzuki in Belgium?

AT: "Since I started to go to Belgium two years ago to live there with Georges Jobé my sand riding has improved. Georges has been a close friend of my dad for over 20 years now and he's also my coach - actually, they're like a team coaching me. Every time I train there with him my sand riding skills improve. I've never had a big step in my improvement, it's just a work in progress. What I can say now is that I enjoy riding in the sand - it's a good feeling."

#### DBR: Then you got a third at the Geneva SX beating Gregory Aranda and finishing right behind Justin Brayton...

AT: "I was kind of riding in my home town so it felt really good. I hadn't raced supercross for maybe four or five years, only practising a lot. Then I find myself in Bercy which wasn't bad - I was sixth overall tied with Cairoli! I then went to Geneva without any kind of pressure - I wasn't expecting to get on the podium at all, I was

basically just thinking about using SX to make me more aggressive for motocross racing."

**DBR:** You dedicated your podium to Marc Ristori who's been in a wheelchair since 2007. Can you tell us about your relationship with Marc and his influence on you?

AT: "Marc is like a brother to me, we've been together since I started to ride as he used to ride and practice with my father at the time. He told me a lot about riding because he had great experience in supercross and motocross. After his accident we've been even closer than we were-- it's been tough for me when a thing like that happens to a person you relate to like a brother. He has been a great friend regarding all aspects in life. I really can't thank him enough and that's why I dedicated my podium to him because he totally deserves it.'

DBR: Since the Geneva SX you've become a new Swiss hero - a daily newspaper even described you as a 'modern time gladiator'! How does that make you feel?

he has to go to the supercross in Geneva as it is the event of the year for our sport there. If you're not there then nobody knows what you're doing - for instance, when the speaker announced my name on the first evening the reaction was of indifference and it was like my hometown. The spectators were only there to see the show and only a few of them knew that I was doing the world championship. But after seeing me riding and my results they started to follow my races enthusiastically - everyone was standing up and cheering when I was passing. Unbelievable! An incredible feeling..."

#### DBR: Do you sometimes feel that everything's happening too fast?

AT: "Having my family with me at all times just makes me feel more relaxed, that's an advantage. I know why I do this sport - it's my way of life and I love it! That fact alone takes half of the pressure from it but of course I get tense, if I didn't I couldn't be a professional rider - even before practice I get anxious because I want to do well. If I have any kind of pressure it's only AT: "If a Swiss rider wants some media attention me creating it for myself, I don't get any of it from



## BIT FROM THE BOSS

#### **FIVE MINUTES WITH STEVE DIXON**

As owner of Arnaud's new Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha team, Steve Dixon signed up the Swiss teen to race alongside 2010 Maxxis British MX2 champ Zach Osborne...

DBR: If it wasn't for Yamaha Europe putting forward this proposal would you have taken Tonus?

SD: "This wasn't at all in the plan – it was supposed to be an easy year – but I like a good challenge. I signed Zach for another two years in June and then I took Dougan for the MX1 and I was happy with that. The deal with Tonus came around after Yamaha Europe, who tried to sign him originally, asked me if I had any space on the team. Well, I really didn't have any space but I thought that it wasn't going to take a lot of effort to run him, you know, he's a good rider and he deserves a good chance."

#### DBR: How do you rate him?

SD: "I've seen Arnaud at the GPs obviously and coming third at the last GP was good. He and Zach have battled quite a few times and I've also watched him when he was at Mallory Park. I think he can be pushing for podiums very regularly and some wins also, he's a good all-round rider. He knows Ken, he knows his competition very well and has a lot of motivation."

DBR: Do you reckon he can regularly challenge Zach? SD: "Yes, of course, it's good to have competition. We were speaking to Cosworth about Arnaud and they said that it's fantastic – most Formula One teams have two top drivers pushing each other. It speeds up development, it keeps everyone motivated and it keeps the drivers – or in this case the riders – on their toes because they know they're going out with the same equipment and if one is winning and the other is in 15th place for instance then..."

DBR: Speaking of F1, will there be any team orders? SD: "No, no team orders. They're on the same equipment – they set it up the way they like it but they will both get the same opportunity. If we need to take the number plate from one bike and put on the other it's no problem. We've always had a good team that's never hidden anything from each other and we've never had any competition between mechanics either, they're all behind a rider if he has any problem. Arnaud is already used to working with someone that is on the top like Roczen so he knows how to act with that and Zach wants a good team-mate so they can learn from each other. It's going to be good."

the outside as in a certain way being with my family protects me from that."

**DBR:** How come Valentin Teillet has a ride with your previous team when you finished seventh in the world standings? Wouldn't you have preferred to stay with them?

AT: "I was motivated to continue with Suzuki at the beginning but I didn't really know what was happening, they just told me that Teka had left. I then took too much time to decide on continuing with Suzuki or with Marcus Bau [Teka's MD] as I have a great relation with both. During the time I was thinking about my opportunities they took Valentin which I understand – I was then out of the team because they needed more budget if they wanted to secure a second rider."

**DBR:** Would you have liked to continue with Teka and go to KTM? What kind of deal could you get with the 350?

AT: "At the time we had a possible deal to move to the MX1 class with DeCarli KTM but we were also talking about continuing on MX2 with

Jacky Martens which was a deal Marcus pushed really hard to get. I was so confused at the time because I liked the Suzuki and I really didn't know what to do – that's why I only found the deal with Steve so late. To be without a team so late in the year was not good for my mind."

#### DBR: So Steve Dixon came to your rescue...

AT: "I only felt reassured when I finally found my deal with Steve, to leave Suzuki was not really easy for me. I feel like this is a good chance since I tried the bike very late in the year – just after Bercy. I actually already knew the bike was good because I rode with Zach during all last year."

## **DBR:** Did you feel like you were being compared to Ken Roczen all the time at Suzuki?

AT: "No, no, the team also took good care of me – it wasn't all about Kenny. There wasn't any problem like that, I think I had a great relationship with the team during the year and especially with Ken – he's a great guy to be with."



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#### DBR: So how did the deal with Yamaha all come together?

AT: "Laurens from Yamaha Europe knew that I was looking for a team and called Steve who called me proposing his idea. I was very glad to hear from him and from that moment to trying the bike it all went very fast and after I rode it I was just like 'where do I sign?' He pushed really hard with his sponsors to find some more budget as the team was already full for the season - it was really nice of him to go through all that for me."

#### DBR: Do you worry that you'll have the same thing going on like in Teka Suzuki with Zach taking the part of Kenny?

AT: "I can tell you already that is surely not going to be the same - I don't expect anything like that happening. I didn't really know him but since the first time I met Steve I had a good feeling about him, that he's doing the best for me. He went to Valence just to watch me riding and I could see how involved he was. I don't believe I'm going to have a first and second rider situation.'

#### DBR: Describe your first impressions of the Yamaha and compare it with last year's ride.

AT: "The immediate difference I felt was the engine which is very powerful, I was so impressed with it. I'm also happy with the suspension as we are working with Ohlins and they are really concerned with the rider's opinions and they have not too many teams which in a way is good for us. It didn't take me too much time to get used to the Yamaha - only some small adjustments were needed."

#### DBR: What do you know about British racing having only ridden at Hawkstone and Mallory?

AT: "Well, I know that there is always a good crowd and they know a lot about motocross so I like that. Looking at some pictures from the British tracks they look like some Swiss tracks, all natural. It's going to be fun to get to know a new championship."

#### DBR: Where are you going to live during the season?

AT: "I'll live in Belgium with Anthony Boissiere who is a close friend of mine so we'll be near

Jobé and my father is going there also so it's all good this way."

#### **DBR:** Is the US part of your future plans?

AT: "It's more like part of my dreams! I know that I have to improve my riding here before going there but I only think of it as a dream I have, I'm more focused on what I'm doing at this moment here. It can be something that I would like to do in my life at some stage - to go there and just ride with those guys, since I was a child I think of that."

#### DBR: Where do you see yourself then in a few vears time?

AT: "I think that the MX1 class could be good for me because my riding style is very smooth and I also like to ride the 450 during practice but I don't really think much about what I'm going to do in the future - I only think about the present!"

#### DBR: Okay, that was the last question...

AT: "We're done? Amazing! That was the biggest interview I ever gave - one hour man! We're good, we're good!"



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# **NEW SENSATION!**

#### BRITISH MX1 TITLE CONTENDER TOM CHURCH BREAKS OFF FROM A PUNISHING PRE-SEASON PREP PROGRAMME TO TRY HIS HAND AT SPRINT ENDUROS...

Words by Jonty Edmunds Photos by Nuno Laranjeira

hink of the places a rider with genuine British MX1 title aspirations might be in February and a forest in Mid Wales probably won't be one of them. California, Florida, Spain even - just about anywhere that has better weather than the UK - but certainly, definitely, absolutely not Mid Wales.

But on February 12 Mid Wales was exactly where Buildbase CCM's Tom Church could be found, nestled inconspicuously in the paddock of the opening round of the Husqvarna ACU British Sprint Enduro Championship. In between testing, racing supercross and generally getting things ready for the start of the domestic motocross season, TC opted to give woods racing a go. Here's what he made of his day in the forest...

"I'll be honest, I was shocked at just how hard some of the course looked when I walked the special test at the opening round of the sprint enduro championship. I'd never seen terrain like it before - let alone ridden anything of the sort - so I knew I was going to be in for a pretty tough day. And I was

"I pretty much thought to myself 'what the hell am I doing here' during the sighting lap. I'm used to having plenty of time to learn a track, not one lap. And I'm used to motocross tracks, not enduro courses in the forest. Unlike anything I've ridden before it took a while to get into and even then it was an eye-opener. But I enjoyed it and learned a hell of a lot.

"Why did I decide to give the event a go? Because I can now and I wanted to give it a go after watching one of the events last year. A few years ago when I was focused on GPs I'd have been in Spain during February putting in the motos and generally riding every day. Now I'm a little older and focusing on races in the UK I figured I'd give it a go. I like trying different stuff but it's not always been possible to do other races in the past. Now I can.

"I was well aware that I couldn't do anything stupid. Thorpey would have killed me. I really wanted to do well in the British Supercross Championship

and with the start of the motocross season just around the corner there was no way I was going to go all out and take any big risks. My plan was to push where I felt safe and just enjoy the day, which I did.

"I knew I wouldn't be on the pace straight away but finishing as the 31st fastest rider on the opening lap was a bit of a shock. I wasn't expecting miracles but I was expecting to do a bit better than that. But getting up to speed over terrain that I wasn't used to riding or had any real time to get used to was difficult. I guess it's what enduro racing is all about but it's hard. Weaving in and out of the trees takes some getting used to.

"The fact that I wasn't racing a motocross track was the biggest difference to what I'm used to. Racing through a forest is night and day different to anything else I've done and being able to read the terrain and know where the best lines are in an instant is seriously difficult. I almost felt a bit claustrophobic riding in the trees at times One thing I've done plenty of



## **HONOURS EVEN!**

KNIGHTER AND SAGAR TOP ELITE

Enduro 3 world champ David Knight and series newcomer Tom Sagar claim a win apiece at the opening two rounds of the 2011 Husqvarna ACU British Sprint Enduro Championship where a tough and enjoyable round one is followed by a rain-drenched - and shortened - round two.

With an eventual winning margin of one-and-a-half minutes Knighter sets the bar high at the end of a tough opening round but doesn't have things all his own way. With Sagar topping the first test following a costly fall from the Manxman it looks like DK might have his work cut out. But by returning to the top to win each of the remaining five tests the KTM star asserts his dominance to claim a comfortable win.

'I made a few mistakes on the opening test which cost me time," explains Knighter, pleased to have bounced back to claim the round one win. "It took me a little while to get into a rhythm but as things got rougher I started riding better

With Sagar a strong second the final Elite class podium spot goes to Greg Evans who like Knight gets faster as the day progresses. Si Wakely ensures a memorable return to racing following his temporary retirement from the sport last year by grabbing fourth on his Husaberg while Jamie Lewis claims fifth ahead of Paul Edmondson.

At the head of the Expert class veteran woods charger Wyn Hughes dominates the proceedings to finish a country mile ahead of his nearest challenger David Lloyd-Jones while Manxman Matthew Lund places third on his sprint enduro debut.

Little known Aussie rider Ben Burrell sets a blisteringly quick pace in the Under 19 class and despite some talented competition makes light work of the conditions to secure a dominant win, some four minutes clear of overall U19 runner-up Joe Jones.

Topping the Under 23 class, Gas Gas-mounted Danny McCanney just manages to get the better of fellow Manxman Alex Rockwell as seven seconds separate the pair. With neither rider making the best of starts both end the day very much on the pace and inside the top 10 of the overall.

Day two ends early and with Tom Sagar at the top of the Elite results. Topping the opening and third and final test he finishes ahead of Knight who like on day one makes a steady start to the proceedings before taking water into his 500 EXC on lap three.

"I'm really pleased with the way things have gone for me," comments Sagar. "It's a shame the weather turned bad but I've enjoyed the event. David was too strong on day one but I put in a good test on the first lap today and things worked out well.

With Knighter pushed down to the runner-up spot Greg Evans matches his day one result of third while Daryl Bolter improves to fourth with Jamie Lewis fifth. David Lloyd-Jones gets one over day one Expert winner Wyn Hughes to top the class as Hughes gets himself stuck on lap two, losing well

Aussie Ben Burrell again sets the pace in the Under 19 class and while his winning margin isn't as big as at round one he places comfortably ahead of Joe Jones and Jamie McCanney. Jamie's brother Danny's the rider to beat again in the Under 23 class where he repeats his round one victory and finishes ahead of Irish motocross racer Stuart Edmonds with Ashley Wood third on his little 125.



over the years is riding in mud but riding in a forest is completely different. The ruts are different, the traction is different, everything is different.

"I soon learned that you can't go at things red hot. You have to pace yourself a little bit, push hard in some areas and not others. I felt like I was riding well in the open areas, it was just in the trees and the ruts that I found it tough. A forest is a bit like a sand track - you have to know where learn that overnight.

"It's hard to gauge your speed, too. But I enjoyed not riding bar-to-bar with other riders. If I could see another rider ahead of me I'd push to try and catch them and hope to pass them. Knowing how hard to push and where to push is something you get from experience. Knowing where you can make time and knowing where you'll only lose time by trying to go too fast is what's really to go, where the best lines are. But you don't important. But like I said it was hard for



Stuart Edmonds and Jamie Lewis – both did well but I wasn't surprised by that. Like me I don't think they really knew what to expect but they got their heads around it. You have to push hard but you can't get too stressed about things. I'm sure that with more time to get used to special test racing we could all do better - I know I could.

"But I'm certainly not disappointed with

David Knight's the Antonio Cairoli of woods riding – he's unbelievable. But after a steady start I started getting used to it and knowing where the track went. After the first lap things improved a lot and towards the end of the day my times started to improve. I'd lost too much time early on to do better in the overall results but I was happy with eighth and not being too far away from



## **2011 DATES & VENUES**

ROUND 1 - 2nd & 3rd April - FatCat MotoParc ROUND 2 - 7th & 8th May - Landrake ROUND 3 – 11th & 12th June – Whitby ROUND 4 – 30th & 31st July – Canada Heights
ROUND 5 – 27th & 28th August – Hawkstone Park ROUND 6 – 3rd & 4th September – Desertmartin, NI ROUND 7 - 24th & 25th September - TBC

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the top five or six.

"I learned a hell of a lot during the day. I always knew that my bike set-up wouldn't be perfect but I know where it can be improved now. I was racing a motocross bike so it was never going to be right for the conditions or the track but it worked well considering. I guess the biggest thing I learned is that reading enduro terrain and riding fast straight away is a real skill. The top riders are pretty much as fast on the first lap as they are at the end of the day which is amazing. I've got a huge amount of respect for what enduro riders do.

"Being able to make split second decisions

about line choice, being able to adapt to the changing track, not making any mistakes and being consistent lap after lap is pretty much what being good at special test racing is all about. But that takes time to learn. For me the whole day was one big learning curve. If I do any more, which I'd like to, I'll know what to expect as I knew next to nothing before the event started. But I soaked up everything that was going on and am a lot more clued up now. Like most things you can't expect to do your best first time around but I know what to expect now.

"What was cool was that there was a lot of

mutual respect between all the riders. Not going at it 40 at a time means things are very different to motocross. The atmosphere's really relaxed which I liked - and even as the new guy loads of riders offered me advice and were happy to chat. As soon as you put your goggles on you race as hard as you can but once the test is finished everything's really chilled out.

"Will I do any more sprints? It depends on my schedule but I'd like to. I feel I know what to expect now so I'd like to see if I could do better. I enjoyed the event even though it was completely different to what I'm used to. It was a great experience."



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### **CLEAN SWEEP FOR TEAM CTI AT SUPERCROSS CHAMPS**

## Congratulations to Team CTi members Steven Sword and Tom Church who start the 2011 season with two British Titles.

The final round of the British Open Supercross Championship was held at the Liverpool Echo Arena on Saturday18th February, and was dominated by the Buildbase CCM duo. A win in the head to head bout for fellow Team CTi member Alex Snow made it a clean sweep for Team CTi.

The two CCM team mates cemented their places in both finals with heat wins and when the gate dropped for the Open final, Stephen took the holeshot and built up a healthy lead, meanwhile Tom gated badly exiting the first corner around mid pack but put in a blinding first lap making his way up to fourth. Slowly reeling in fellow Alex Snow and moving up to second, one lap from the flag Tom made a mistake and just managed to finish the race in third place, enough for him to take the British Open Supercross Championship with Stephen taking the race win.

The final race of the night was the SX1 pro final and when the gate dropped it was a Buildbase CCM 1-2, with Stephen taking the holeshot and Tom close in second, the positions stayed like this until Tom fell on a rough corner managing to pick his bike up and retain his second position, by three quarter stage, Tom reeled in Stephen to go on and take the race win with Stephen in second giving Tom and Buildbase CCM Racing their second title of the night.

Buildbase CCM Racings' sporting director Dave Thorpe commented "the team came here to build on winter training in preparation for the British Maxxis opening round. Taking the win and the titles will increase the riders' confidence.





# TOOMUCH COUNTY?

AT JUST 18 YEARS OLD AND WITH THREE YEARS GP EXPERIENCE UNDER HIS BELT, MEL POCOCK'S GOING BACK TO BASICS WITH THE NEW RELENTLESS SUZUKI BY TAS TEAM...

Words by Jeff Perrett Photos by Sutty

e's only just 18 and yet Mel Pocock has been a GP racer for three years. This year he won't be racing a full season of world championship events but armed with his new Relentless Suzuki by TAS deal he sees this as a big step forward.

Honesty is a bit of a theme you'll pick up running through this interview and I'll start the trend by saying I don't know Mel as well as I do some of the other British pro riders. Probably due to the fact he hasn't been a pro that long really and, to be fair, I've never really made the effort to get to know him better. What I do know about Mel though, I like. He always seems to be smiling and enjoying himself and he certainly has a strong family ethic around him with all three of his brothers also racing the sport we love.

After a successful – if not blistering – youth career he came into the adult pro ranks and within what seemed like a blink of an eye was lining up behind the startgate on the world stage riding for Steve Dixon's Yamaha team. I reckon he's handled himself well since then because it's a huge step-up no matter what your age, let alone for a 15-year-old. Not every rider will take to it like a duck to water as Ken Roczen and Jeffrey Herlings have.

So it came as a surprise to me to hear that Mel was not only leaving Britain's most established and experienced grand prix team but also that he would no longer be racing the world championship. What I have seen in Mel is an assured self-belief and confidence and I thought he'd be out there plying his trade again this year, chipping away at it and looking to break into the top 10 like Jake Nicholls.

"To be honest I've done three years of GP racing and I always felt I was back pack and that got to my head a little bit," says a direct to the point Mel when we finally get started on the interview after waiting for some bowel movement on his behalf! "So me and my family started to discuss it and we all decided the right decision is to take some time out of GPs and focus on getting in that habit of racing for podiums and wins again on a regular basis and build back up to GPs with more experience and maturity. Steve's team is a GP team and that's what he does, that's the focus and the priority. He does the British championship and it means a lot to him and the team but GPs are more important.

"So we spoke to Steve and he was cool with it all, he understands and we started looking around for other rides. We tried a few bikes and few teams but it didn't seem to fit and it was looking like we'd stay

with Steve but maybe just concentrate on racing in the UK but then Relentless Suzuki by TAS came along. We went out to Belfast to see them and once we were there we thought 'well let's crack on then!' They have an impressive set-up and it felt right. It's a good change for me – a new bike, new people and a new challenge. If it goes well then we can progress together and maybe I can go back into the world championship with them? We'll probably do a few GPs this year."

Listening to Mel explain his decision I got a strong sense of a young man who really has his head screwed on. It takes a strong character to admit that maybe it isn't going to plan and swallow a hefty bite of pride. I applaud him for that, especially for having the foresight to see the bigger picture...

"I'm not saying I didn't enjoy the GPs – I loved every single race – but it was hard for my mind always being beaten like that. But I've learned from that and that's why we've made the decision we have. I think it's like one step back for me to take three forward. I was 15 when I started doing the world championship and I know Roczen and Herlings came in and were running out front at GP races at that age but I don't think it's fair to compare everyone to that. Everyone can peak at different times. I was just a UK schoolboy rider really and we were fortunate enough to go straight into GPs.

"The experience was pretty mind-blowing at times. I'd be there thinking 'that's Cairoli down there at the other end of the startgate' – I was more in awe of who was overtaking me than racing them. It was such an awesome experience. I think it was more of a shock to me than any pressure. I didn't feel that until last year really. Because I'd been doing them for three years people – including myself – expected better results. Jake [Nicholls] started to break into the top 10 and everyone expected me to do the same.

"I'd race Zach and Jake at British championships and not be far off but be back in the 20s at GPs and just couldn't ever seem to bridge that gap. It's not like I wasn't trying. I'd run in the top 10 a few times but then make some mistakes and drop back right at the end. Those guys are so on it out there at the front, you make one mistake and they're just straight past you like a road race. But at least I've experienced it — racing GPs has been unreal really."

experienced it – racing GPs has been unreal really."
As I said from the outset, Mel comes across as honest, quietly confident and appears to take everything in his stride but clearly underneath all that the fire burns and it seems he expected





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more of himself. So I ask him if he felt the pressure from his team and others around him by jumping into GPs, especially by pretty much going straight in from youth motocross.

"There was no pressure on me from Steve in any way, shape or form or anyone else for that matter. It only came from myself and from my head. If I wasn't doing how I wanted to do I'd beat myself up mentally. Rather than coming in from a race and saying to myself 'well actually I did all right that time' I'd come in and say to myself 'what am I doing wrong?' so now I've learned that and grown up a bit more."

So at 18 years of age with lessons learned Mel takes a stronger mental approach into 2011 with his new team. With fresh emphasis and with him focusing on not necessarily a new target but maybe just not as many he's in good shape, especially with a new trainer and the excitement of all the change.

"I have a lot going on at the minute. I've been training down in Devon a lot with Dave Thorpe. He's been teaching me how to start the bike up, pull away, change gears that kind of thing really! I think he used to be quite a good club racer in his time from what I'm told! No, obviously, working with Dave is incredible, I mean he's a legend and knows what it takes to win at the highest level possible. I have so much respect for him — it's hard not to, the man is a three-time world champion.

"If you can't learn from someone like that then forget it. Dave is brilliant at telling you how it is and what to do to improve it. I feel like I'm in better hands now, maybe because the target has changed a little. This winter I've stayed in the UK and not gone to Spain or America like before. I've thrown it out there and just wanted to tough it out at home. I've been training with Dave since November 1 and I've trained and trained and trained. I feel more focused, relaxed

and ready than ever before."

Clearly he's not messing about. He knows if he steps it up at home with his new team and really gets stuck in and starts mixing it with Osborne, Tonus and Nicholls in the Maxxis British championship and does the business at the Red Bull Pro Nationals it will bolster his wounded confidence. He's also extremely confident in his new team and the decision to sign with them.

"My new team is absolutely brilliant. I love it already. Everything is really well organised and they're on the ball with everything. I'm not saying Steve wasn't, he just has his style of preparing and does so much more than just manage his team on a day-to-day basis so sometimes it can feel a little bit like organised chaos because he's so involved with everything about the team. But that's the passion that makes him a success.

"The TAS team know what the score is even though they've been out of motocross for a while and it's back to being a brand-new set-up again. Adam Lyons [Team Manager] and Philip Neill [Team Owner] are both ex GP racers with loads of experience. They can definitely put a good bike and team set-up together with the resources they have and their knowledge, not just from motocross but from their Superbike team. When I turned up in their workshop I thought 'this is where it's at – I want to be riding for them'. The only real downside is that the workshop is in Northern Ireland whereas Steve's place wasn't too far from home but that isn't a problem at all, it was just convenient.

"The bike is really good. I instantly felt good on it and I'm not just saying that. I think the fuel injection makes such a difference. You can start it up fresh in the morning and hold it wide open and it doesn't bog or anything and it will only get better the more we work together with it."

## Mel On...

JASON DOUGAN

"Dougan has to be the craziest guy in British motocross. Now he's been my team-mate I've got to know him and he's so random and comes up with some really funny stuff. Not being mean but not exactly being nice either – he's not quite there! Some days he seems normal and then other days he's out there and you think 'who is this guy? He must've eaten something funny!' He's such a good laugh to be around."

#### STEVE DIXON

"I haven't got a bad word to say about Steve. He took me from a schoolboy hacker to a GP racer and I'll thank him all the way for that. I haven't burned any bridges with anyone and Bradley is still there riding with Steve's team. Honestly, I don't think there's another person out there in British motocross that puts in the hours that Steve does. He'll be there until 3am on a regular basis — it's ridiculous. He has so much pride in his racing and I'll always admire him for that. Although sorting things out like flights and stuff with him is a nightmare! I guess it's because the racing and getting the bikes perfect is so important to him."





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## Mel On...

"It's got to be Tony Cairoli, he's the man. He always goes out and does the business on and off the track. He's just himself, taking time to talk to everyone and signing autographs but also having fun and finding the time to be prepared properly. I think he has the balance perfect. I look up to him a lot. As far as racing friends go I've got to say Zach Osborne is the man. We have a great relationship - it's like he's my older brother. He stayed at our house for eight months when he first came over.

#### **EUROPE OR USA?**

"I like to be at home so I don't think racing in America is a career for me. I'd like to maybe try doing the AMA nationals one year just to say I've done it but no more than that. You have to be willing to do supercross and be good at it to succeed in America and it's not my style. In my blood is to race motocross and let it hang out. You can't just go out on an AMA SX track and pick it up unless you're something special or you've been practising it for a while. Nah, motocross is where it's at for me - two 30-minute motos flat-out. That to me is the ultimate.





Take the slight dent in his confidence last season out of the equation for a moment and it's clear that Mel is a buoyant young man, full of beans, at ease with himself and the world around him. There's no sense that the world owes him or anything like that. He comes across as calm, managed and precise in his outlook and attitude towards life. That's obviously part of his DNA but he's also quick to point out that a good upbringing and very supportive family play

"I've been brought up well and to always say please and thank you. I'm a bit of a farm boy really in that I try to keep down to earth. I'm not a Ken Roczen, Jeffrey Herlings or Stefan Everts or anyone like that but I try my hardest at everything, always try to improve and be appreciative of anything I've been given whether it's advice, sponsorship, whatever, that's what I've been taught. I think if you always push to get the best out of yourself then it's that little bit easier to be happy.

"I never big myself up or anything like that. I come to the startline of every race with the same attitude as the one before regardless of the result. I know I've done my work so I know I'm ready, that's how I get my confidence up. I believe I can win and be a champion through hard work and being a little patient with realistic goals. That's why I'm not racing the world championship this year. Obviously, I hope it works out - it may turn out to be a major mistake but I'm confident it's the best thing for my career.

Family comes first and clearly for young Mel Jnr - his father is also called Mel - that's very much the case. He understands that getting the kids out on the track isn't that simple for any parent whether it be financially or emotionally, especially when you consider there's four Pococks currently racing all over the country.

"I don't know how my mum and dad do it. My granddad comes along too when he can, he loves it and he supports me too. He also pays me a pound per point that I score. When I was

racing GPs if they couldn't make it they'd be texting all the time. All my brothers ride and we all come in with a smile on our faces - it's just what we do as a family, we all love it. I don't think we're any different to most people in motocross it's just that there are four brothers all racing! My dad used to race and the older he gets the better he was. He was an established rider and then I came about and that was it, everything got put into me to ride bikes. Mum didn't stand a chance did she - especially with the others all coming along.

"I started racing on my sixth birthday at an evening meeting at Staplecross near Hastings on an XR70. It was the youngest age I could start racing at the time. Dad put it in third gear for me and I kept it in that gear all the way round. I was terrible. I was lapped three times. I got to this bombhole and stopped on the top and started crying because I didn't want to go down it because it was too steep. My dad ran halfway across the field and pushed me down it!"













01-08 PRO50







## Mel On...

"Bradley's so determined. I've lost count of how many times he's broken his leg and he still keeps coming back for more. He believes in himself so much, sometimes too much. At home he's quiet and on his computer and then about 10 girls turn up - so credit to him for that.

"I'd describe Brett as a real steady Eddie. He's the kind of rider that will win a championship but never win a race. It's different on Call of Duty though - he never loses on that! Honestly, it's unbelievable. He's got his gamer's chair and his mouthpiece wrapped round and he's in his zone. He's not as keen as the rest of us to go riding all the time but once he gets to a race he's into it.

'Matthew's mad! Mad Math we call him. He'll do stuff like holeshot it and then three corners later lay it down and be last, come up through and do it again. He's like that at home too ...



encouragement, eh? Mel's not really complaining though, he's thankful for all that his parents have done for him and with sibling rivalries running through the family he's always kept on his toes. Intrigued by the dynamics of the family I ask Mel what it's like being the eldest brother.

"Ah, it's cool. I think we're all treated fairly and the brotherly love and all that is respectful but there's massive competition within our family. Bradley would always be looking to better me and then Brett is a little better than Matthew on the bike so all Matt wants to do is beat Brett - it's awesome and funny. We'll go practising and I'll be saying 'Bradley, just chill out man!' because he'll be flat-out all the time.

"Me and Bradley are normally the instigators of arguments and fights and will set Brett and Matty off. We'll egg them on to do something and they'll try to out-do each other to prove it to us. They'll do something stupid then we'll walk away and mum or dad will come along and go mental at them both. We'll go off and laugh at them

them all ride and support them for sure, I'd never stay at home. We're a big family that feels even bigger with our regular crew, the Osmastons. We get on great with them because their family is like ours and they live quite close. We all look out for each other and encourage each other. When we get to the races we all hang out together. Every motocross family has their best friends and people around them to keep spirits high, the Osmastons are ours. It's great.

'Motocross is a drug for sure but it's got to be right at home I reckon. If you're having fun as a family and mates then you're going to do better out on the race track.

I couldn't agree with Mel more and with his new team and fresh approach I believe just like him – that he's moving forwards not backwards. And that's in every sense from being a motocross racer to a maturing young man. Fair play to him for that and bloody good luck to him I say because more often than not you make your own...





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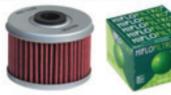
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# EBIRTH

**NEW MOMENTUM THANKS TO THE** 

Words by Jon Urry Photos by Jon Urry/Husqvarna archive

he last decade hasn't been kind to one of the most famous names in off-road motorcycles. Under the financially unpredictable ownership of the Cagiva Group it's fair to say Husqvarna struggled. Investment was lacking. the factory's production facilities were tired and it was starting to damage the brand's reputation as spare parts supply and reliability took a turn for the worse. With Cagiva's enigmatic boss Claudio Castiglioni selling off debt-ridden parts of the company the future looked gloomy.

Then in 2007 everything changed.

BMW Motorrad was looking for a way of expanding its motorcycle business into the off-road sector and what better path than to take over an already established brand? A reported 93,000,000 Euros changed hands and the Swedish company that became Italian now

gained German owners. Three years on and the results are starting to show but it has been anything but an easy ride for all concerned.

"When BMW took over Husqvarna it was in a relatively bad shape," says Husqvarna President Klaus Allisat. "One of the major problems was that there was no financing for the company which is why suppliers weren't being paid and this led to issues with the spare parts side of the business as well as quality control and so on. Servicing is a big concern to off-road customers, they require parts immediately. So we have made this a top priority."

But this was no simple task and required

even more investment to the tune of nearly 50,000,000 Euros from BMW. Husqvarna was spread between two sites with a lake in between them and consolidating the company required building a whole new factory as well as installing a new working ethos.

"We had to separate the company from the Cagiva Group which was very difficult as they were linked together on one site. It was only across the lake in Varese but the engine assembly line, R&D and purchasing was with Cagiva. We had to move everything over and build a new Husqvarna factory on the original site to accommodate the whole company rather than just the assembly line.

"We have reinvested in new equipment, built a whole new factory and put the level of our assembly up to the standard of BMW. Pretty much the whole of the last three years has been dedicated to bringing Husqvarna up to the precise standards of the BMW company."

So, with a total of nearly 150,000,000 Euros invested in Husqvarna, what exactly is BMW hoping to achieve with the company?



## **HISTORY LESSON**

#### FROM GUNS TO GLORY...

Husqvarna was formed in the Swedish village of Huskvarna as a firearms manufacturer in 1689 but in 1877 the Swedish became less violent and the company started producing other metal items such as sewing machines.

In 1903 it produced its first motorcycle using imported engines and by 1919 the company was producing and racing its own bikes and motors. Considerable off-road success followed in the 1950s and 1960s and even legendary actor Steve McQueen raced a Husky in the 1970s.

In 1986 the Cagiva Group purchased Husqvarna and the company moved to Italy where it has remained ever since. In 2007 BMW bought the company from Cagiva for 93,000,000 Euros. To date Husqvarna has won 78 world championships in motocross, enduro and supermoto.





"If you think of BMW and the Mini story, that is pretty much the same thing as it is doing with Husqvarna. We took a very strong brand in Mini and developed the company with new cars to attract new younger customers who would eventually switch to BMW. We are aiming to do the same with Husqvarna.

"People start riding off-road at a very young age and progress to the bigger bikes before possibly stopping off-road at around 30 and looking at road bikes. BMW saw Husqvarna as a strong off-road name and the hope is that when they want to buy a road bike they will chose a BMW. We want to connect Husqvarna very closely with BMW so that when people stop riding competitively off-road they switch to a GS or a cruiser, they stick to motorcycling but change brand to the BMW side of the business."





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Although this may seem on the face of it a very one-sided relationship, the truth of the matter is that BMW's investment brings with it much more than just financial support. Currently Husqvarna makes around 12,000 motorcycles a year, something that the company is looking to expand upon with BMW's backing and resources.

"To make Husqvarna a success we simply need better products than our competitors. We need to be lighter, to have a higher performance or have innovations that our competitors can't afford because they don't have the funds or expertise. In the motorcycle world there are very few companies who can do this but BMW is one of them.

"The motorcycle side has been able to take ABS, traction control etc from the car world which has speeded up development and now Husqvarna can also benefit from this technology. At the end of the day Husqvarna is a relatively small company – we make around 12,000 bikes a year – but our target is to reach 30-35,000 in the next three years so we need to not only gain some share of the market from our competitors but also launch new models using BMW's technology."

A three-fold increase in just three years seems optimistic to say the least, especially considering the off-road world and the tough economic climate. However, Husqvarna is looking beyond its traditional dirtbike stomping ground and, like KTM before it, expanding its model range to include a greater number of purely on-road vehicles.

"I don't think the off-road market will expand much so we will have a conquest strategy with Husqvarna, we will try and take market share from our competitors. But at the same time we will be going into on-road segments in a very similar way to KTM over the last few years. They expanded from purely off-road to a stage where they now have quite a significant on-road portfolio. We have a couple of very interesting bikes coming out this year and we feel there is a lot of potential in them."

There are very strong rumours - not to mention several bikes hidden under red covers within the R&D department - that suggest Husqvarna is set to launch two new large capacity road bikes at the end of 2011. Again, in much the same way as KTM started, they will be semi-familiar territory and are expected to be a large supermoto and an adventure bike using BMW's F800 parallel twin motor which Husqvarna is thought to have bored out to 900cc from its current 798cc format. Considering BMW already has several models based around its F800 engine - one of which is the off-road F800GS - is there not a possibility of Husqvarna stepping on its parent company's toes? Not according to Allisat.

"There will always be some overlap between Husqvarna and BMW but we intend to differentiate our brand from BMW. We have a strong heritage and Italian design that is totally different to anything at BMW and we want to use this to attract a younger customer or a more fashionable one - a customer who is a bit of a show-off, who will appreciate our designs. If you look at the bikes that we will be launching this year they are quite revolutionary - you will need to be guite self-confident to own them, not be afraid to say 'I have the coolest bike out there' and we need to develop the brand to help those people find us. It is what Mini did in the past. The whole system of selling the product needs to be targeted to this audience."



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And speaking of the younger audience, are we going to see Husqvarna making more 125cc bikes to draw new riders into the brand?

"BMW has no intention of entering the 125 segment so I think the future lies in the off-road sector and the smaller capacity engine attracting the younger audience - there may be some expansion in that, it is one thing we are looking at. The 125 sector is very price sensitive, KTM has been developing its bike with Bajaj and we are also in contact with a supplier in Asia and are in the process of developing a product in this range to overcome the cost issues.'

Developing a new range of on-road bikes is one thing, getting them to the customer is another. The off and on-road sector are two very different markets and few dealerships are experienced at selling in both areas, making it tricky for an off-road manufacturer to make an impression in the on-road world. Are we likely to see radical changes to the Husqvarna distribution network? Possibly even incorporating the brand within established BMW showrooms?

"We are in the process of changing the sales network. There will always be separate dealership for the pure off-road and on-road side of the business but we believe that with the introduction of new on-road Husqvarna products there will be a time when BMW dealership will also sell Husqvarna products. We have been piloting this in Spain, Greece and Switzerland and it may be the way forward but we need to see if it works as the off-road customer is very different to the on-road one."

With all this talk of on-road bikes will Husqvarna be reducing its interest in the off-road sector, the area the company built its reputation on? While Allisat admits that he predicts in three years time around 30 per cent of Husqvarna's production will be pure road bikes, off-road is

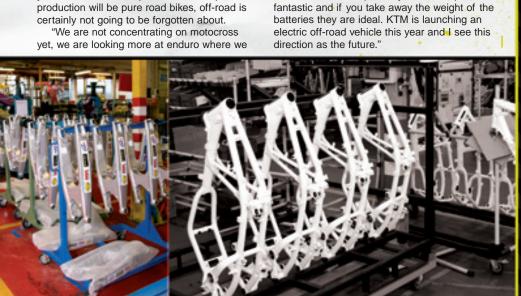
are already successful. Motocross success requires huge investment of money and at the moment we are just looking at what the motocross requires and what we need to develop before working out our strategy. A lot like BMW did with the S1000RR, we will study our competitors and then start from scratch to develop the bike that will be the best from the very beginning."

Considering the impact on the road bike market and racetrack the S1000RR has had since its launch in 2010, Husqvarna's competitors should take this statement very seriously indeed. There is no doubt that with 78 world championships already under its belt Husqvarna knows how to build a wining bike. now with BMW's backing and technological resources the R&D department must be straining at the leash to get to work.

So with its finances now in order and a new production facility up and running, where does Allisat see Husqvarna's future heading?

"At the moment everything is going against the motorcycle industry but there will always be a place for motorcycling as a leisure activity both on and off-road as it is so much fun. When the economy picks up and people have money and are looking for an adrenalin kick they will look towards motorcycles and we need to be able to support this.

'Obviously for the combustion engine it will become more and more tough, especially in Europe where it is pretty much a closed shop, so I feel electric vehicles will play a more dominant role in the next 10 years. They have no noise or pollution and I feel the off-road world will certainly go into electric vehicles. If you think about it there are many, many advantages - the motor suits enduro perfectly as the torque is fantastic and if you take away the weight of the batteries they are ideal. KTM is launching an electric off-road vehicle this year and I see this direction as the future.





#### QUALITY CONTROL

With over 10,000,000 Euros spent on the building alone the new production facility at Casinetta de Biandronno is a state of the art motorcycle assembly plant. To help banish the demons of the past and conform with BMW's strict guidelines, the factory contains a number of rooms dedicated to quality control as well as a whole design department and racing lab.

The engines are assembled on two production lines before being moved to another line where they are slotted into frames and the whole bike assembled. The lines currently run at eight vehicles an hour and around 13,000 Husqvarnas a year are produced. The factory's designed to operate at three times this capacity, ready for future expansion.

Every single engine is dyno tested before being inserted into a frame and every finished bike is also dynoed to ensure it is up to standard, something that didn't happen in the past. Everywhere you look inside the factory there are new machines, new tools and new buildings and you get a real feeling of a company that has suddenly won the lottery and bought everything that it has always wanted but never been able to afford.

Away from the production facilities the 'Centrostile' department is a whole area dedicated to designing future Husky products. Inside this super-secretive area the team can create life size models of future bikes as well as design parts and complete bikes on computers. The Centrosile is so well equipped the team managed to create the Mille3 concept bike in less than five months although to be fair the engine is made of plastic...





### ACIDTEST

THE OPENING ROUND OF THE 2011 BRITISH ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP? WITH WAKKER STILL WOUNDED LLEWELYN PAVEY STEPS UP TO THE PLATE TO PUT THE TE250 HUSOVARNA THROUGH ITS PACES...

Words by Llewelyn Pavey Photos by Llewelyn Pavey and Simon Hewitt

usqvarna are in a strange place. They have huge backing from BMW and are pushing hard to step out from the KTM shadow that has been cast over the world of enduro bikes. There's no doubt the ambition is there with the whole UK distribution being redesigned - new dealers, great deals, the whole package. But it doesn't mean anything if the bikes ride like crap.

A couple of years back Husqvarna completely redesigned their 250F. Starting with the motocross bike, they worked from the ground up and then gave it a funky name - the X-Light. It didn't stand out from the crowd all that much, it was a vast improvement on the old machine but in the world of MX where Japan and KTM rule it got pushed into the storeroom. The next year came the enduro version and while no-one said it was a bad bike, it wasn't an EXC-slayer and the only people that appeared to buy them were those who didn't like orange.

When I was offered the chance to ride one at the first round of the BEC I jumped at the chance. Having been on the orange bandwagon along with most of the rest of the UK for the last few years I was excited to compare, contrast and fully prepped to pick out every little fault.

The one thing I don't think anybody can fault Husky on is looks - the TE250 is a stunner! Its sharp, sleek lines make it look like a true race bike and the red and white colour scheme is real purdy..

Rolling the bike out of the shop it doesn't feel all that different to any other bike but after loading it up and moving the bike around it's clear that over the past few years Husky have improved one area of their bike building significantly. The attention to detail is much improved, everything looks much more - if I dare borrow the expression from KTM - 'ready to race'! It's the little things that are nice like the rear mudguard that's been designed so it doesn't cut your hand in half when you need to lift the back. Like I said, little things...

I felt the Muntjac was as good an event as any to test a bike - it's physical, sandy and demanding on a bike's suspension and handling. I did however forget that it's ridiculously demanding on the rider as well...

I took my new, gorgeous steed out for a guick shakedown on the Friday before the race just to get a feel and set levers, bars and sag. The first thing I noticed is the bike doesn't do anything weird. The handlebars are relatively neutral and the clutch feels good - like a KTM in fact. Everything feels good like it should.

At 6ft 2ins I'm a pretty tall fella but even then everything was comfortable. The only downsides on the ergonomics were a matter of personal preference. I like quite a low bar and the Husky has that high Euro handlebar feel. The only other thing I really didn't like with the ergos were the grips. It's an easy thing to fix but as my hands would discover they leave a lot to be desired.

#### **SUPER-SAVER?**

A warranty is a strange concept for dirt bike riders but it could just be the best thing the BMW group have brought to off-road. BMW's cars and bikes - and Husqvarna's n'all - come with a full warranty programme that covers pretty much everything that isn't wear and tear (so that rules out wheel bearings, chains and sprockets etc)...

All it requires is - and stick with me here the bike to be given to your dealer for the major services as stated in the manual, use original parts for maintenance and - voila - you have a two-year warranty with no mileage limit. So if you do happen to do some serious damage it could just maybe save you a large chunk of cash and effort if you're willing to jump through a few hoops...





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Heading into the first test of the day the thing that surprised me most over the last TE I rode was the improvement with the fuel injection system. The bike ran so clean, it was pulling tall gears easily and felt surprisingly strong. Enduro 250s are not renowned for their arm-ripping, beastly motors and the TE is no different but it was by no means slow. The bike doesn't feel abundant with anything in the engine department. It's not got a ripping top-end - if anything it's a little flat but not outrageously so. The bottom-end doesn't pull hard either but it does work well through the mid-range and it's easy to find grip in the slippery areas - and the Muntjac had some surprisingly slippery going on the test - and when it opened up it pulled my 15 stone along at a rate that it should be proud of.

At no point did it get out of my hands - it never had an aggressive delivery which made it incredibly easy and forgiving to ride, an all-round pleasure. Much like the other 250s it likes to rev and it worked best when you kept it shifting and singing but it was never particularly difficult to do so and when you did need to pull tall gears and have a little finesse it has the bottom-end to fall back on. I mentioned it before but the fuelling genuinely impressed me. The fuel-injection was working well and didn't miss a beat all day something I couldn't say about the last TÉ250 I rode. I was genuinely impressed.

Suspension is a strange area for me - I'm heavier than your average guy and most enduro bikes come too soft. Much to my surprise I was able to comfortably set the sag to my weight but around Thetford Forest it was never going to be stiff enough. The shock suffered miserably at my hands and as the day wore on and the holes got deeper and the edges squarer it got scary.

The set-up wasn't too bad, it was very

'reboundy' but being too soft can't have helped this and by the second lap it was blowing through the stroke on the ever-increasing bumps. Like with most suspension on enduro bikes it would benefit from a little love in the workshop.

In stark contrast the Kayaba forks were pretty damn good considering and never threw any surprises my way. They didn't have the same habit of disappearing through the stroke that the shock seemed keen on and held tall and dealt with the whooped-out course in relative comfort. On the big whoops they could be harsh in the initial part of the stroke but apart from that I didn't really have any complaints. Like all suspension, it could be improved to suit each rider but it was perfectly rideable out of the crate.

The area the TE really came into its own for me was its handling. It's surprisingly easy to throw around all day, tips into corners very easily and holds its line well in rutted corners with little effort. The Muntjac has levels of grip that only sand can bring but even during the shakedown around a wet, slippery MX track the front liked to be pushed and responded well. It tracked well and never wanted to climb out of the ruts. Making little adjustments to your direction or changing lines were a breeze and the bike seems to do exactly what you wanted it to.

All round Husqvarna have a 250F that is competitive and easy to ride. In stock form it's not a world dominating bike - it isn't pushing the limits of power production but it does pretty much everything it should do well. It's easy to ride, which makes it easy to ride fast too and in my opinion that's always a plus. Sure, it's not the perfect bike and if you were serious about racing then you'd make changes but if a 250F is on your radar then the Husky's definitely got to be a serious consideration...



#### **SPECIFICATIONS**

Capacity: 249.5cc

Bore and stroke: 79mm x 50.9mm Transmission: Six-speed Fuel tank capacity: 8.5 litres

Front suspension: Kayaba USD 48mm

(300mm travel)

Rear suspension: Sachs

(296mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc Rear brake: 240mm disc Seat height: 950mm Wheelbase: 1470mm Ground clearance: 290mm

Kerb weight: 106kg RRP: £6725

THE BARCELONA INDOOR IS ONE OF THE SWEETEST EVENTS ON THE SPANISH OFF-ROAD CALENDAR BUT WHAT MAKES IT SO TASTY?

igh on a hillside overlooking the beautiful coastal city of Barcelona sits the Palau Sant Jordi stadium which translates to St George's Palace if you only speak-a-de English – and, yep, that's the very same dragon-slaying dude whose death we honour each year on April 23. Anyway, the stadium is basically a 12,000-seat relic of the 1992 Olympics that now regularly hosts rock shows, expos and quite possibly hobos but I don't know.

As well as hosting all of the above and much more, for the past 21 years the stadium has been home to the Barcelona Indoor Trial and since the millennium the Barcelona Indoor Enduro n'all. For a good few years these two events co-existed quite happily but with declining spectator numbers at both for the past few editions the pair have been pushed together - like a top-heavy promo girl's most prized possessions - by event promoters RPM Racing to create one monster of an indoor motosicklin' event and one that the siesta-lovin' spectators seem to adore...

The format's kept quite simple so it's not too confusing for the average Jose to follow. The enduro LCQs run first, the X-Trial – that's the hip new name for the Indoor World Trial Championship - semis and finals are next followed by the three Indoor Enduro World Championship finals that are punctuated by a demolition derby for yokel racers and the night race for non-qualifiers. The slick programme keeps the fans on the edge of their 24-Euro seats for three hours or so until at around 9pm when they all head home.

With a crowd of over 10,000 it's obvious that the event is hitting the spot with the Spanish and there's no reason why a similar event wouldn't work in the UK.

Okay, so the cost of importing dirt means that it's impossible for any UK promoter to come close to matching that ticket price but the British SX series has proved it's not impossible to sell out arenas with a slightly higher ticket price provided the show hits the spot. And how could an action-packed endurocross/ indoor trial not wow spectators in a glam location like the O2 Arena?

Of course the O2, LG, MEN or Metro Arenas don't offer anywhere near the same amount of floor space that the Palau Sant Jordi does but that could also work in the event's favour n'all. Personally, I'm not a big fan of seeing dirt bikes ridden on anything other than dirt and so to watch an indoor trial held on a clinically clean surface goes against everything that's ingrained in me. I say let's reinvent indoor trials so they closer resemble what happens outside in the real world.

It definitely wouldn't be impossible for a smart promoter to plot sections over, around or next to the organic-based hazards built for indoor enduros and, who knows, it might even bring some added excitement into the indoor trials game as shifting dirt and changing terrain affect the difficulty of the sections.

And surely seeing Bou and co riding

natural-ish terrain with turns and stuff thrown in would keep the crowd's attention longer than the bunch of all-or-nothing unidirectional big box sections that we see now. I mean, watching five of the six best trials riders in the world fiving a section within the first few metres really doesn't make for great viewing although saying that I've seen 10,000 or so screaming Spaniards who would definitely disagree.

While there are currently no plans to bring a Barcelona-style double-header to the UK - or completely reinvent the sport of indoor trials so it's more to my liking the good news is that flights to Spain are reasonably cheap, the weather in Barcelona is always much better than it is here and there's gonna be another indoor epic next year. Do yourself a favour and make sure you're there...





#### THE BOU SHOW!

With this year's X-Trial championship being dominated by Spaniards - and Montesa's Toni Bou in particular - there's plenty for the home crowd to cheer about in Barcelona. Of the six semi-finalists only two aren't home country heroes and those international interlopers - Brit Jack Challoner and Japan's Takahisa Fujinami - are both eliminated before the final begins anyway.

The ensuing four-way scrap between Bou, Adam Raga (Gas Gas), Albert Cabestany (Sherco) and Jeroni Fajardo (Ossa) is dominated by Bou – the only four-stroke rider in the pack - who is definitely head and shoulders above the rest at this point in his career. Five marks clear after the semis Bou drops nothing in the head-to-head races and stays feet up for the rest of the trial to end the night on just four marks lost – and three of them are time penalties!

#### RESULT - X-TRIAL

в	1	Toni Bou	Montesa	4
Е	2	Albert Cabestany	Sherco	22
h	3	Adam Raga	Gas Gas	25
ı	4	Jeroni Fajardo	Ossa	35
	5	lack Challener	Poto	10 (aliminated in son

The Palau Sant Jordi is an

### BLAST OFF! KTM'S 2011 FACTORY EN

There's been a whole heap of hoo-ha surrounding KTM's all-new world championship winning 350cc four-stroke motocross bike and now the enduro version – the 350 EXC-F – is set to spread similar ripples through the off-road world. Officially launched to the press in Barcelona, the new bike certainly looks ready to race and with 2009 title winner Johnny Aubert onboard one in this year's Enduro World Championship it could well be a winner in the ultra-competitive E2 division.

Although it looks pretty much the same – except for the lighting kit and kickstart – as the 350 SX-F that Tony Cairoli dominated the 2010 MX1 world championship with, the enduroised 350 is actually a very different beast. The motor features a modified cylinderhead, a heavier and stronger generator, a new crankshaft with more inertia, six instead of five-speed transmission and a clutch unit with an internal damping mechanism and diaphragm spring. With peak performance somewhere above 45hp at 10,000 rpm KTM claim that the 350 EXC-F should be powerful enough to beat any 450 in the E2 class.

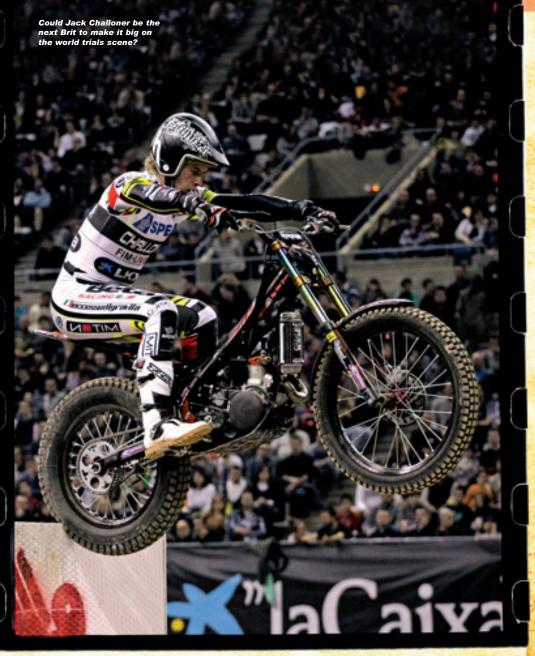
The chassis too is slightly different with the biggest difference between the enduro and motocross bike being the lack of suspension linkage. That's right folks, it seems that the PDS system is still king in enduro racing mostly thanks to

the increased ground clearance and weight savings a linkageless system offers. But while a lot of the emphasis on the 2011 KTM factory enduro team launch is placed on the 350, the real stars of the show are of course the team riders. The six-man team is headed by 30-year-old Frenchman Johnny Aubert. The nephew of motocross grand prix legend Jean-Jacques Bruno, Johnny is already a two-time EWC champion and will be hunting for his third gold medal in 2011. Riding shotgun in the E2 class will be 26-year-old Spaniard Cristobal Guerrero.

David Knight - who shares his birthday with Aubert on May 31 although he's actually a couple of years older - is KTM's great hope in the E3 category where the Manxman will be looking to secure his fourth world championship win on the

Meanwhile, in the E1 class fiery Finlander Eero Remes and Italian stallion Thomas Oldrati will battle it out for supremacy on the Austrian marque's 250 EXC-F. While he's not expected to take in a full tour of duty in the EWC Taddy Blazusiak will be racing selected rounds as well as all the extreme and endurocross events he can muster.





#### IF YOU DON'T KNOW JACK THEN DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT - SIMPLY READ ON AND LEARN A LITTLE...

With two world trials titles to his name, 20-year-old Halifax lad Jack Challoner's well on his way to becoming a major player in world trials and if he keeps on keeping on could be the kid to fill King Dougie's shoes. We hooked up with the Beta boy wonder in Barcelona to find out a little more about this future force of the feet-up game...

DBR: You've just turned 20 and you've already got two world, two European and three British titles to your name - are you the next Dougle Lampkin?

JC: "I don't know about that but Dougie is my ultimate inspiration. I grew up watching him so even to be included in the same line-up is a dream come true To achieve what he has achieved is the goal for all trials riders and I'll continue to watch and learn from him and then hopefully stand on that podium as much as he has over the next 10 years."

DBR: You're currently Britain's leading rider in the X-Trial championship. Is it a surprise to you that you're doing so well in your rookie year?

JC: "I knew the step up to the senior level of the championships was going to be a big one but it was only after the Sheffield Arena Trial in January that I really knew I could get a good result in the X-Trial championships. I know I have it in me to do well at this level and I know that my best results could have been better so I will continue to push all the limits.

DBR: Can you carry this form over into the outdoor season?

JC: "The outdoor world championships will be another big step up for me as it's completely different from the indoor championships. I have been relentlessly practising the biggest and hardest sections I can find to give myself the best chance to continue this good form.

DBR: What are your overall thoughts on the Barcelona event?

JC: "Barcelona is brilliant, the organisers do a cracking job and the crowd there is always very large and very noisy. I can remember a couple of years ago I went to watch and there was no enduro so the trials sections were much bigger and I think that possibly made it more entertaining for the general punters. But I think having the enduro there is a good thing too as it gives the night more dimension and introduces different audiences to the different disciplines."

DBR: Do you think a similar type of event could work in

JC: "I'm sure it's something that a lot of the British riders would want to compete in. Both enduro and trials are very spectacular and I'm sure it would attract a massive crowd too. It would be great for such an event to exist at the O2 in London."

DBR: Finally, what does it feel like to wear a Lycra one-piece in front of 12,000 cheering fans? JC: "Ha ha! I used to say that I'd never wear a one-piece but now I prefer to ride in one all the time because they allow you more movement and more flexibility - every inch counts in trials!"

#### **FLAT OUT!**

#### TADDY'S THE DADDY IN FULL-BORE ENDURO WAR...

While the X-Trial is all about the local heroes it's a very different story in enduroland where fan fave Ivan Cervantes fails to make the points-payers in his debut ride on the locally produced Gas Gas and all the other Spaniards manage to miss the podium n'all - d'oh! But that doesn't stop the fans from getting right into it and - as with all indoor enduros - there's plenty to get right into.

Manxman David Knight is fastest in quali on the all-new KTM 350 EXC-F but extreme enduro sensation Taddy Blazusiak is right on the pace with him and although the KTM crew are hoping to launch their new baby with a win the word in the pits is that Knighter's to let the Polish prince take the all-important championship points - not that these two traditionally take team orders to heart, eh Taddy?

Whether Knighter lets him have it or not - I personally don't think he has much choice in the matter - the end result is that Blazusiak takes top honours in all three finals to not only dominate proceedings and take maximum points on the night but inadvertently wrap up the shortened two-round world championship as well. Knighter runs 2-3-2 to take a well-deserved second overall and give KTM's new 350 some credibility - not that it really needs it - while Swedish young gun Joakim Ljunggren takes the final podium spot on Husaberg's new 300cc two-stroke with a 3-2-5 scorecard.

Alfredo Gomez is first of the homeboys in fourth while Brits Graham Jarvis, Dougie Lampkin and Jonny Walker finish fifth, eighth and ninth Dougle dogged by a migraine and some serious bad luck thwarting Walker's attempts.

After finishing fifth in the first final the young Cumbrian miraculously leads the middle leg after starting on the second row until Knighter wipes him out on the finishline log section. Returning for race three the KORR teamster follows Lampkin across the line in 10th for that impressive ninth overall in only his second ever indoor race.

#### RESULTS - INDOOR ENDURO

Taddy Blazusiak KTM 20+20+20=60 2 David Knight 17+14+17=48 KTM 14+17+10=41 Joakim Ljunggren Husaberg Alfredo Gomez Husaberg 11+10+14=35 Graham Jarvis Husaberg 9+11+8=28 Dougie Lampkin Gas Gas 5+7+6=18 10+1+5=16 Jonny Walker KTM





## BULLFIGHTERS

TOP TRACKS, TOP RIDERS AND TOP RACING - THE 2011 RED BULL PRO NATIONALS PROMISE TO PROVIDE A BAR-BANGIN' BANQUET FOR THE MX HUNGRY POPULATION...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Ian Roxburgh/Events22

to see top-flight motocross in this country your choices were limited to the ACU national series, a handful of big one-off races (including, on occasions, the odd British GP) and, well, that was yer lot! For a country that invented the sport opportunities to watch top pros bangin' bars were few and far between - maybe measuring a meagre 10 weekends a year. Well not anymore...

Now entering its third year, Events22's Red Bull Pro Nationals has quickly established itself as a forward-thinking series that's attracting a growing audience through a mix of great racing, great tracks and a great publicity machine that's actively reaching out to take motocross to the mainstream.

One of the RBPN's unique selling points is its family-orientated festival atmosphere spread over a weekend where it shares the billing with two other high-profile series – the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup and Fuchs Silkolene two-stroke championship. And in between the on-track action visitors are treated to FMX displays as well as actively encouraged to try their hands at off-road riding through a

nce upon a time if you wanted dedicated Try-Out area. Last year 2,000 first-timers had a go and this year Events22 is hoping to boost this by a further 50 per cent.

But while presenting MX to the masses in the best possible light is a worthy, worthwhile mission, let's not forget that this is a race series. So as important as introducing fresh fans to the sport undoubtedly is, for the purpose of this preview what we want to know is who's going to actually win the bloody thing?

On paper at least there aren't any easy answers with a tantalising combination of seasoned experience, youthful exuberance, some seriously quick wildcards and a spot of closed-season shuffling ensuring that the RBPN series is going to kick off in 2011 looking very different to how it ended 2010...

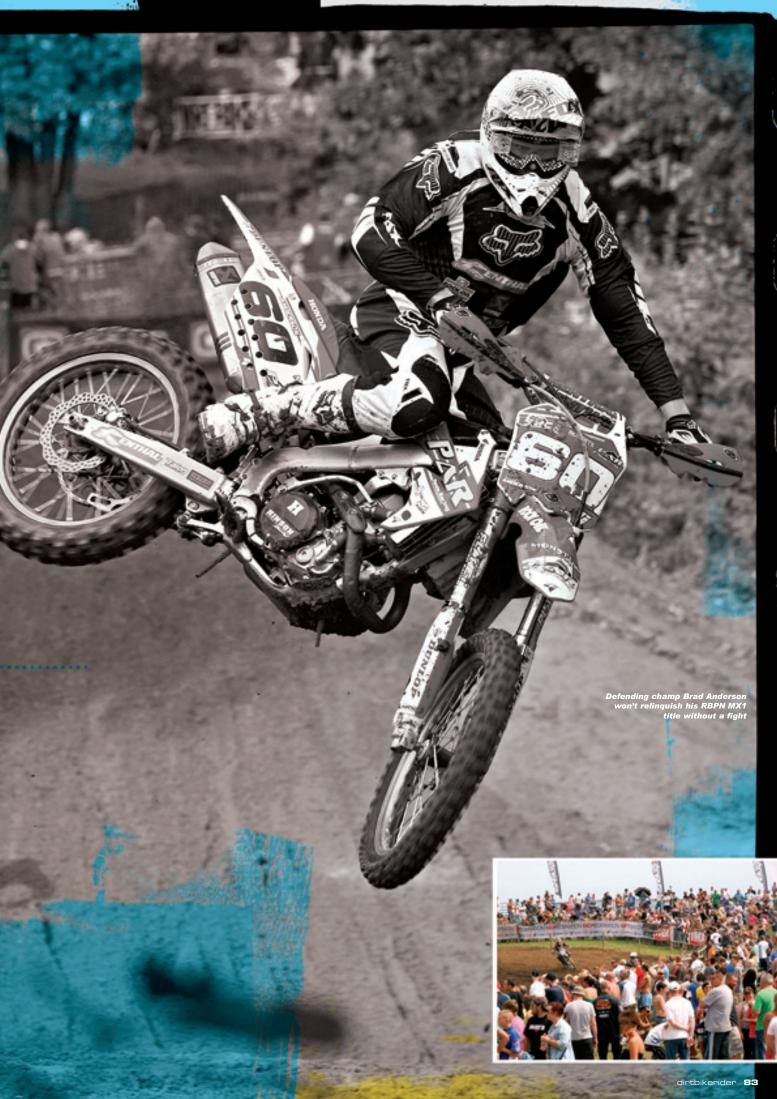
Making an appearance as a wildcard rider at the opening round at FatCat Motorparc, LS Motors Honda's Shaun Simpson will be a tough man to beat. Based in Belgium for his assault on the 2011 world championship, Woody loves the soft stuff and the South Yorkshire track is every bit as sandy the iconic Lommel circuit that's just down the road from the 23-year-old Scotsman's new pad. But Shaun isn't doing the full series so isn't a true contender...

And besides, Shaun's not the only MX1 rider capable of winning at the opening round. How about the Buildbase CCM two-man team of Stephen Sword and Tom Church? Both riders can win indoors and out and with another year of development behind the Clews' Cement Mixer, Swordy and TC are packing some serious firepower.

It's impossible to speculate on the MX1 silverware without mentioning defending champ Brad Anderson who's sticking with PAR Honda for another season. As well as lifting the 2010 crown by a mile from James Noble and Carl Nunn who've both retired from racing, Ando put in a storming performance in Colorado at the MXdN to prove he can bang bars with the very best

Last year PAR doubled up in the RBPN with Irishman Martin Barr lifting the MX2 title. Well Marty's thrown a spanner into the works by signing up with Proppa.com KTM, relinquishing his crown and moving up to the MX1 class where he'll take on his former team-mate aboard a 350SX-F alongside Nez Parker.

On the subject of 350-riding



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Irishmen, when his GP commitments don't take him away expect to see Graeme Irwin gripping it, ripping it and quite possibly flipping it as well as he does his bit for Roger Magee's HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK outfit. The teenaged tearaway has one of the most all-action styles you'll ever see which makes for some great entertainment.

At the other end of the Irish spectrum there's Gordon Crockard. A decade ago he was winning GPs and the Crock Star still has the pace needed to win races as well as the smarts to take titles. After a few unsettled years of switching between bikes he's starting the 2011 campaign riding for the Ireland-based Relentless Suzuki by TAS team and looking forward to showing that there's still life in the old dog.

Other podium threats include Jamie Law, Alex Snow and Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki's Gert Krestinov and there's also new Samsung Yamaha signing Kristian Whatley. The son of former British champion Jeremy Whatley, Kristian's an unknown

quantity in his debut season in MX1. Dripping with natural talent and the ability to pick the very best racing lines, the 21-year-old has the capacity to thrill and frustrate in equal measure but if team owner Roy Emberson can get the best out of him he could be the surprise package of the class in 2011.

With no defending champion in the MX2 class the title chase has been thrown wide open - although, to be fair, even if Martin Barr was staying put he'd have his work cut out to retain his crown.

Looking down the list of riders no-one springs out as a definite champion. On his 2010 form you'd have to go for HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK's Jake Nicholls but The Reverend's committed to GPs so he won't contest the full RBPN series.

Nev Bradshaw won the MX2 title in its inaugural year but didn't figure in the 2010 championship hunt. Newly signed to MVR-D Honda, could this be the year he regains his crown? Not if last year's vice-champ





#### RACES IN PLACES

THE WHEN AND WHERE OF THE RB

#### ROUND 1 – FATCAT MOTOPARC, APRIL 2-3

Deep sand and an all-new track awaits riders at the opening round of the series staged at Martin Cravendale's off-road Utopia just off Junction 4 of the M18

**HOW TO GET THERE...**Er, just off Junction 4 of the M18. Postcode DN3 3EH

#### ROUND 2 - LANDRAKE MOTO PARC, MAY 7-8

Fast and flowing with some technical jump sections, Landrake is deep in the South West of England, just over the border into Cornwall. It's a bit of a trek but well worth it.

#### HOW TO GET THERE...

The majority of the population need to take the M5 south to the end, then join the A38. LMP is just across the Tamar Bridge past Plymouth. Postcode PL12 5EP

#### ROUND 3 – SKELDER BANK, JUNE 11-12

Quite possibly the most picturesque circuit in the UK, the Skelder Bank track overlooks the seaside town of Whitby where Dracula is reckoned to have first come ashore in England. Lots of big jumps and a technical rhythm section get the blood pumping and make for great racing.

#### HOW TO GET THERE...

Enter Whitby along the main drag from either north or south, then take the A171 towards Guisborough and look for the signs. Postcode YO21 1TN

#### ROUND 4 - CANADA HEIGHTS, JULY 30-31

The famous Kentish track needs no introduction for MX fans. Depending on the weather it can either be sandy heaven or muddy hell but no matter what Mother Nature throws at the circuit it's always a big physical challenge

#### HOW TO GET THERE...

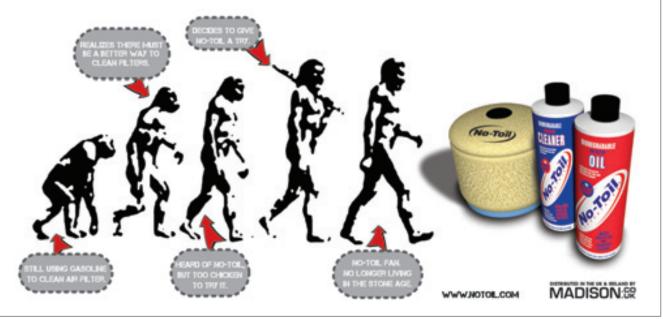
Leave the M25 at Junction 3 or the M20 at Junction 1 and follow the signs for Brands Hatch. Go straight over the small roundabout and then left onto Button Street. Postcode is BR8 8DX





# Are YOU still living... in the Stone Age?







#### ROUND 5 – HAWKSTONE PARK, AUGUST 27-28

Quite possibly the godfather of British MX tracks, historic Hawkstone Park is a super-tough sand track with an iconic hill and the ability to sort the men from the boys.

#### HOW TO GET THERE...

About 12 miles north of Shrewsbury, you can hit Hawkstone from either the A49 or A53. Postcode is SY4 4NA

#### ROUND 6 – PORTER'S PIT, SEPTEMBER 3-4

Whataboutye? Northern Ireland's premier MX track, the Desertmartin circuit is another sandy test of man and machine with lots of jumps and elevation changes and featuring a whole new back section since it was last used for top-flight motocross.

#### HOW TO GET THERE...

Either grab a cheap flight from Ryan Air or Easyjet to Belfast International or ferry it across from ports including Holyhead, Liverpool, Stranraer or Troon. Desertmartin's on the far side of Lough Neagh. Get on the B40 to Draperstown and you won't go far wrong. Postcode is BT45 5QW

#### ROUND 7 - TBA, SEPTEMBER 24-25

Keep your eyes and ears open for news of the venue for the final round...

Skelder Bank has got to be one of the most picturesque tracks in the country



Proven race winner Ray Rowson moves down to MX2 this season with Embo's Samsung Yamaha team. The Shropshire speedster's pedigree on a 450F has never been in doubt but there's a question mark over how well he's suited to a 250F.

There seems to be a perennial question mark over Lanes Kawasaki's Scott Elderfield who's also lining up in the MX2 division. On his day Scott's as fast as anyone in the country but his days can be few and far between and sometimes he leaves you with the impression that his heart's just not in it.

In a class packed with up-and-comers experience could be key and that's something

new Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki signing Bryan MacKenzie's certainly got along with Mel Pocock who's newly hooked up to the Relentless Suzuki by TAS team. And TM UK/Electraction rider Stuart Edmonds has also been around the block a few times and his added familiarity with the blue Italian machine could be an advantage given many of his rivals' fresh deals for 2011.

TAPECE

Among the hungry young riders looking to make a breakthrough at adult level are Josh Waterman, Luke Hawkins and Kayne Lamont. Moto One KTM's Waterman is keen to build on a super-successful schoolboy career and PAR Honda's Hawkins showed his class last season in the European championship. Kiwi Lamont, over here racing for the Hooper Maxxis Suzuki team, is seriously swift and aiming to make his presence felt in Europe.

For more info on the series point your PC towards www.redbullpronationals.com



#### THE DADDY OF 'EM ALL!

#### DON'T MISS...HAWKSTONE PARK

Every year the organisers of the Red Bull Pro Nationals like to lay on one stand-out event - a flagship meeting for the series – and this year's will be round five at the world famous Hawkstone Park on August 27-28.

Run the weekend after the British Grand Prix, the

Hawkstone event will also be the second round of the new International Red Bull Pro National series that will kick off in Holland earlier in the year. To accommodate an expected influx of top European and American riders the classes will be split for the only time this season with separate motos for MX1 and MX2.





## DRAGACT!

IS A DODGY BACK BRAKE COSTING YOU A FORTUNE IN WORN OUT BRAKE PADS? OUR RESIDENT TECHNICAL TRANNIE TAKES US THROUGH SOME POSSIBLE CAUSES LIKE SOME SORTA SPANNER-SPINNING, SAUSAGE-SHIFTIN' SHIRLEY BASSEY...

y mate Marcus blows through back brake pads way quicker than anybody else on this planet which for him makes motocross an even more expensive hobby than it needs to be. There are several reasons why rear pads would wear out prematurely which I'm gonna go over right now so you'll know what to do if you start hitting similar problems.

The rear brake system isn't particularly complicated but there are quite a few moving parts involved which can wear or get clogged up with dirt and when either – or both – of those things occur that's normally the cause of the problem. Poor brake pedal adjustment can also cause issues as can a rider with a heavy right boot – great for driving your car fast but not so good for elongating the life of your rear brake pads. Let's start with the basics and work forward from there...

Put the bike on a stand so the rear wheel is off the ground. In a perfect world the rear brake will be dragging like a Friday afternoon in the office and the problem will be an easy one to spot but unfortunately that's rarely the way things go.

To ensure the problem's a technical one and not an easily-fixable rider related one, fit the fully kitted rider to the bike and ask him run through his normal riding positions — everything bar braking. As he does his moves check that the rear wheel continues to spin freely throughout. It might sound like a dumb thing to check but if your rider is resting his foot on the brake or applying it inadvertently then that could well be your problem right there. Assuming that the rider is not causing the problem return them to their box until the next time you need gripping and ripping.

Next up clean the brake piston as well as you can and then push the rear pads apart. If everything is working properly the piston should push back into the calliper nice and smoothly offering a little resistance as the fluid is pushed back through the system.

Now remove the brake pad holding pin and visually check it for wear. Quite often the pads will wear little grooves in the pin which can be enough to hold them in the brake on position and make your rear brake drag. If it is showing any signs of wear I'd recommend replacing it because Race FX dealers can supply one that costs around £2.50 – at that price it's almost worth replacing this pin every time you do a pad change. Pop out the pads and check that there's nothing that could be causing problems – a build up of dirt, small stones, obvious damage etc – and give

everything a good clean while you're in there.

With the pads out check that the calliper is able to run smoothly side to side on its two sealed pins. If it's not running smoothly whip out the rear wheel and pull the calliper off the pins so you can check they're not worn, scored or dirty. If they're any of the above then either clean or replace them remembering to lube them up with quality grease during the rebuild process.

Because of the nature of the problem we're dealing with here we'll be replacing the brake pads. Clean and then fit the old heat shields to the new pads, pop the pads into the calliper and then refit the brake pad pin making sure it's tightened to the correct torque – check your manual for that setting. Pop in your rear wheel, tighten that to the specified torque then pump up the rear brake pedal before you forget.

If you've checked everything diligently, cleaned and fitted everything properly then chances are you'll have sorted the problem even if it is inadvertently. But before we give ourselves high-fives all round we're gonna take a look at the pedal and pivot assembly too.

Sitting so low to the ground this part of your bike takes a lot of abuse and is constantly hammered by rocks, roost and if you race UK supercross then quite possibly Ashley Greedy's front wheel. It's all quite simple but there are two pivot points that can cause problems of the stickyness variety. Start by taking out the large Allen bolt that acts as the main pivot for the brake pedal. Give it a good clean, check for damage or wear and if it's all good give the bolt a good greasing and pop it back in there. I'd advise you to do this pretty much every week as part of your pre-ride maintenance.

The second pivot point links the pedal to the master cylinder. Normally it's held on by a clip or split pin so is easy to remove, clean and grease. Unless your bike is a million years old and you regularly ride it in the sea I don't think it'll cause you any problems but it's well worth checking, cleaning and greasing anyway, right?

One last thing to consider is the brake fluid. If it's got super-hot or even boiled through being dragged the chances are that its performance is seriously impaired so it's worth replacing the lot. This will require you bleeding the system which really isn't too difficult when done properly.

Tune in next month and I'll cover that process in my five-minute fix...





#### WALKER'SFIVE-MINUTE FIX!

#### A TEMPORARY FIX FOR WEEPING FORK SEALS...

Okay, so you've got to the track and one of your fork seals has decided to spring a leak on the way there so what do you do? Before you pack up and head home cursing the fact you need new fork seals you need to know that the chances are that it's just a little bit of trapped dirt causing the wee weep down your leg - I mean a small weep obviously and not a wee weep because that would tell me you've got a whole heap of other problems going on in your life that I don't wanna get into right now.

Anyway, weeping seals are the #1 cause of premature seal replacement because people all too often confuse a small weep with a blown seal - there's a joke in there somewhere involving Eskimos, skidoos and a frosty moustache or something - and send their forks off for costly repairs. But before you get out the cardboard boxes and packing tape and post off your front boingers to your suspension tuner of choice I want you to try something that'll cost you no more than a fiver and around five minutes of your time.

This little fella is called a Motion Pro Seal Mate and it's available from a Madison (www.madison.co.uk) dealer near you now. It's a cheap little tool that is designed to remove any dirt that's trapped underneath your fork seal causing it to weep. Basically, it's a very thin piece of bendable plastic with a hooked end that you can slide between your fork leg and oil seal to pull out any debris that's causing seepage. It's a handy thing to keep in your toolbox and it might just be a life saver one day.

Before you get going on this one I want you to clean all around the dust seal on your forks. Then use a small screwdriver to slide away the dust seal which will expose the oil seal. If the oil seal has a spring around it roll it down the leg away from the seal.

Clean the area around the oil seal using contact cleaner and an unused toothbrush followed by a soft towel. When it's clean enough to eat your dinner off I want you to go and grab some racing grease and a little fork oil. Mix a tiny amount of fork oil and grease together then smear the concoction onto the fork leg and around the seal to help lubricate things nice and slippery like.

Now grab your Seal Mate and insert the hooked end between the seal and the fork leg. Rotate the Seal Mate around the fork leg making sure that the hooked end is the leading edge. After one full rotation – or more if you're feeling fruity – start to pull your Seal Mate out but continue rotating it around the fork leg as you do so.

If you took a spring off the seal roll that back on right now, clean the fork leg again and then compress the front suspension several times - go on give it a good bounce. Now check for oil leaks. If it's all good then give yourself a pat on the back, pop the dust seal on and go get geared up.

If it's still leaking, lube it up again and work the Seal Mate in there some more. I reckon that the majority of the time a little Seal Mate session should sort you out but if it doesn't and your seals really are fecked then you know what you need to do.

## LARRY'S GAME

ENERATION OF NORTHERN IRISH GP RACERS,

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

orthern Ireland enjoys a rich heritage in motorcycle road racing, fuelled by such iconic events as the Ulster Grand Prix and North West 200. But it's only in the last 30 years that the Irish have penetrated world motocross and the ground-breaking stalwart who paved the province's way to international renown recently turned 50, providing an admirable excuse for Ulster's off-road fraternity to celebrate in style at McBride's Bar in Comber!

Laurence Spence spent nine seasons on the 500GP trail during the 1980s, his best being the 1984 campaign when he finished joint sixth in the world championship and apart from newly-crowned triple champion Andre Malherbe was the only rider to score points in

Born January 18 1961 in Londonderry, Laurence was inevitably immersed in motorcycle sport because his father Raymond 'Hooky' Spence - was a bluff, expansive Irish racer who competed in both road races and motocross. This ebullient Ulsterman also raced speedway, grass-tracked sidecars, played ice hockey and blew the saxophone in a dance band. Ray modified a Honda monkey bike for his young son to mess around with in local fields before the family moved to Belfast and built (quite literally!) a filling station that incorporated a motorcycle shop.

Ulster schoolboy MX was emerging in 1972 and a 175cc twin-cylinder Yamaha road bike lay neglected in the garage. "Dad said I could have it to race if I put in an 18 inch back wheel," smiles Spence. "It didn't handle too well with three inches of movement back and front but it was the fastest bike on

A TM Suzuki followed but Ray was still busy racing motocross himself. "Ma used to take me to schoolboy meetings. I raced grasstrack and motocross because they still ran them together in Ireland. It teaches you how to start and go round corners quick!"

He practised incessantly, seven nights a week. "I'd go out every evening with two

half-gallon cans of petrol slung over the bars and ride until they ran out!" Laurence won youth grasstrack and motocross titles before moving into adult competition on a KX420 Kawasaki in 1977, winning the Irish championship straight off after changing mid-season to a 250 EMC and working with his dad during school holidays.

Spence rode the 1978 Trophee des Nations at Kester in Belgium under age. "I drove Robert Wilkinson's van the whole way and back without a licence. Never been abroad in

He entered grands prix the following year, he and his father tramping the continent in a rough old Transit van. Laurence, racing a Cotton EMX, nailed an eighth at Farleigh Castle and finished 10th at Payerne in Switzerland. That was the weekend I joined them in the van for an overnight charge back to Calais - bike, sweaty gear and Laurence asleep in a congealed heap in the back and Raymond keeping himself awake with blistering black coffee. They were a typical father and son outfit. "We never got on at all," laughs Laurence. "We'd go for a couple of days not speaking!"



DIRT



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He scored further points at Namur and Luxembourg's final round to secure 19th in the table. "I used to learn by following such as Graham Noyce and watching their lines during practice.'

A Yamaha ride in 1980 yielded ninth and seventh places in Canada, a sparkling sixth at Gaildorf and more points in the final round at Luxembourg where Ettelbruck's tricky grass cambers suited Laurence's smooth, effortless riding style. He stayed with Yamaha for 1981 on a machine supplied by Mitsui with Austria and Namur highlights of another 16th place finish in the 500GPs, two points behind David Thorpe's Kawasaki. But 1982 started badly with two months wasted at the Wilcomoto factory in Hereford before realising that the home-brewed bike was too slow and heavy.

Only three weeks remained until the first grand prix when Laurence was rescued by Maico importer Badger Goss and distinguished Irish dealer Norman Watt. A beefy 13 stone, the imperturbable Irishman suffered his first serious injury in the Finnish GP at Ruskeasanta when he crashed heavily and bust his shoulder. He returned for the last three rounds, stormed to sixth in the first moto at Luxembourg and finished a sensational fourth in the second, both times fending off Honda-mounted American Gary Semics!

He began 1983 without Ray but still with Maico. The van broke down in Germany. "I was towed all the way back to Slough by Willie Simpson on a three-foot rope at 90 miles an hour!" Then Maico went bust.

Snapped up by Alec Wright for an injury-stricken Team Green, he now had a factory mechanic but suffered gearbox problems on an old ex-Thorpe air-cooled KX500. Yet points in his Finnish debut, Italy and France preceded a memorable afternoon at Farleigh Castle. Flu during the week didn't deter the burly Irishman who got embroiled in a sizzling contest for second with the full-blooded factory hardware of Suzuki's Harry Everts and Honda trio Noyce, Thorpe and Malherbe.

High-revving ex-125 champ Harry managed to fend off low-revving Larry's lengthy attack but the latter had Malherbe on the ragged edge until fading to fourth, still ahead of Thorpe and Noyce. "I couldn't breathe for the last 10 minutes," said Spence after his customary post-race nap. "I should have passed Harry, though. He was holding me up, so he was!"
In race two Spence fought from eighth place

into fourth, once more challenging Everts until gearbox gremlins struck again. Stuck with only first and top gears, Laurence laboured through the final laps until - rounding the last bend his abused engine seized solid. Watched by 25,000 spellbound spectators, he somehow manhandled the dead weight a final 60 feet, losing 40 seconds and five places before collapsing into Alec Wright's willing arms to a roar from the crowd. How had he done it? "We call it the 'Spence Grunt'," grinned chain-smoking spannerman Keith Frost. "He inherited it from his grandmother!"

Another strong performance in Namur helped seal Spence a proper Kawasaki berth alongside Georges Jobe for 1984. And what a year! Sixth overall at the opening round in Austria, the phlegmatic Ulsterman never finished a single race outside the top 12, his best days in Canada and back at Namur where he tied for fourth overall with Jukka Sintonen (Honda). He and the smiling Finn finished the season joint sixth in the series and 1985 started out in similar vein, Laurence scoring good points in all eight opening GP motos - including a fourth in France - before a cracked sternum suffered at the rescheduled Patchquick Trophy abruptly ended his campaign.

The following season Spence was offered



FARLEGGY CASTLE 1985: DANK VON VELTHEVEN (46) MEAKS PAST

terms by KTM importer Gordon Jones and top six finishes in Austria and Germany helped him to 12th in the world before the Austrian factory also struck financial difficulties. "This trait seemed to follow my career," reckons Spence. "EMC, Wilcomoto, Maico and KTM all went under when I was with them!"

STACKEN SPENCE, 25000 FAM TRANSFINED

Alec Wright stepped in again but a nasty accident at the second round in France left Spence with a broken arm when, after setting a terrific qualifying time, he sailed over the finishing line jump and collided with a rider coming the opposite way practising starts! He returned to mount his

first - and last - GP rostrum, third overall alongside Jobe and Kurt Nicoll at Farleigh Castle. "But I still knew that Sunday night I was going to quit." He ended up a familiar 19th in the world rankings - just where he'd started out nine years earlier.

Disillusioned by injuries and idiots, the sport's most laidback grand prix rider retired at the tender age of 26 to ride local Ulster races and open his own motorcycle repair shop. But Laurence Spence had paved the way for the province's youth to realise that they too could compete with the best and his legacy lives on to this day.

# HAPPY DAYS!

AT THE BACK END OF 2010 CHAD REED DECIDED HE WANTED OUT OF HIS MONSTER KAWASAKI DEAL AND AFTER JUMPING SHIP AND SETTING UP ON HIS OWN HE'S GRINNING — AND WINNING — AGAIN...

acers are prima donnas. They live life as if they are the only thing that matters. They want their money, their bike, their water, their gear, their time to test and train. They create a world that quite literally revolves around them. But the thing is, they have to in order to win. It takes a seriously selfish dedication to your craft to win at the top level of anything and maybe more so with professional motocross and supercross because it is so involved and so specialised.

So, when you raise your child to be nice, to share, to play well with others etc you're not raising a top-notch motocross racer. You're raising a good citizen instead.

But for Chad Reed, now that he has made a lot of money and had a lot of success, it's not just about what he can gain in a material sense anymore. It's about fun. It's about the love of the sport. And it's still about winning...

Chad came to the USA racing for Yamaha on their new YZ250F and he spent seven years racing the blue machines but things went sour in the middle of a championship run in 2008. In Detroit, Reed's YZ450F

coughed on a tricky on/off section and he went over the bars violently. That was the last straw and Reed's contract negotiations quickly took on a new theme.

contract negotiations quickly took on a new theme.

"I was happy at Yamaha," says Reed. "I got on really well with Keith McCarty and Bob Starr – you know, upper management. My relationship with Yamaha was probably better than it had ever been." But Reed had signed with Larry Brooks' L&M Racing team in part because Brooks promised to rid the bike of this dreaded 'bog'. After he nearly ended his championship in Detroit, Reed had a new condition to his proposed 2009 contract with L&M.

"I felt that nothing could fix the Yamaha at that point," Reed remembers. "And that wasn't that I hated it or didn't like it, it was just a reality. It was dangerous. It had hurt me a couple of times and it almost cost me a championship in 2008. So I really wanted Larry to consider moving to a different brand."

That wasn't going to happen and before the 2008 supercross championship was even over Brooks had stopped by James Stewart's house in Corona and offered him Reed's ride.



He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene... Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing.

Steve Cox is a Glock-packin', raccoon-shootin', gung-ho American MX journo – trinsk Hunter S Thompson with a moto-habit – who follows the entire AWA SXMX tour. Since moving on from defunct US weekly



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Reed rode for Suzuki in 2009, nearly winning the championship indoors against Stewart although Stewart took the win racing for Reed's old team. Then Reed decided to race outdoors – even though he wasn't contracted to do so – and won the outdoor championship for the first time in his career.

Second place in the 450cc SX championship and first place outdoors should solidify a contract extension, shouldn't it? Not for Reed who was faced with a pay cut for 2010 if he stayed with Suzuki and he wasn't prepared to take the pay cut. So in stepped Monster Energy.

Monster wanted Reed but Kawasaki didn't.

Monster wanted Reed but Kawasaki didn't. Monster signed Reed and placed him on the Kawasaki team and things never really meshed. Reed had the worst season he'd ever had as a professional and at the end of the season, even though he had an option for a second year on his contract, he opted out.

"I felt that it was in my best interest and in their best interest that we parted ways," Reed explains. "And it was 100 per cent influenced by me. I asked to be released. I was begging them. "Keep your money, I want out." And I called my agent and told him I wanted out and to make it happen and I think

he thought I was crazy. I think he questioned everything about me. 'Dude, you have another year on your deal and it's a lot of money...' But I told him I wanted out and he took care of it for me."

Since he was out of his contract he could do what he wanted. "I was out of a contract so I was free to ride all the bikes. I had rode them all. And I actually personally went out and purchased a Honda 450 and just loved it. I was having a blast on it. And riding was fun again. I had had two or three months off the bike and it was just fun. I was having so much fun riding and then I decided last-minute to race that race in Australia [the first round of the Australasian SX series].

"I get a bit of a kick out of going there and doing it, like, the way I did. I mean, I literally tested for half-a-day with Bones at Pro Circuit. I purchased all of the A kit suspension and engine stuff that I felt I needed at Pro Circuit. They gave me a pipe and silencer that I think Kevin [Windham] was running and then I spent half the day with Bones and then off I went to Australia."

He went to Australia and dominated the event. "It really

honestly got that drive going again, that fire burning. And the fact that I just had so much fun. I mean, winning is always fun but in my hometown and just riding a motorcycle that I felt comfortable on..."

So Chad decided he wanted to race in 2011

So Chad decided he wanted to race in 2011 regardless of the money – which was a good job considering there wasn't any...
Reed started putting the team together. Backing

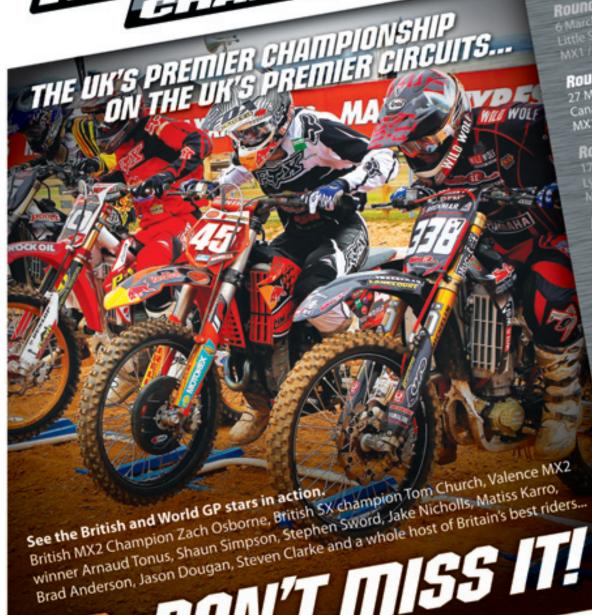
Reed started putting the team together. Backing from Bel-Ray is a massive help as are his many other sponsors but the reality is that he's still short of actually paying his bills. He's losing money on his team right now. And that's okay with Chad...

"Mitch [Payton of Pro Circuit] supported it," Reed

"Mitch [Payton of Pro Circuit] supported it," Reed says. "We talked and I really felt that if there was anyone in this industry that could give me a motorcycle at a production level and at a low-cost level that was competitive it was Mitch Payton. And PC was basically Mitch and his team and then Bones and his team and the suspension department. I just felt that those guys allowed me







6 March Little Silver, Exeter MX1 / MX2 / Vets

Round 2

27 March Canada Heights, Kent MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

Round 3

17 April Lyng, Norton MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

Round 4

May Milton Park, Northants MX1/MX2/MXY2

**Round 5** 

26 June Desertmartin, N. fre MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

Round 6

Round 7

14 August Duns, Scotland MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

Round 8

2 October Hawkstone Park MX1 / MX2 / Vets

# DON'T MISS IT!

When 27 March Where Canada Heights What MX1/MX2/MXY2 Don't miss out on the action! Practice starts 09.00 and the first race commences 12.15

Adults £20 Children £5 Family Ticket £45 Concessions apply

















Regardless of the money, Reed didn't expect to go out and get his ass kicked. "I didn't come back to racing because my ego is too big to walk away at this point," Reed explains. "I mean, I came back because I felt that the fire wasn't out and that I needed to give it another try. You know, when I had all of those commitments and I had that confidence and that belief in the fact that I could have an amazing motorcycle in a production Honda and then Mitch could do his thing to it and then with

Bel-Ray's commitment we were ready to go. "So, from then it was a matter of talking to the Fox and Shift guys, working at that deal and whether I'm going to be Fox, whether I'm going to be Shift – as it works out I'm Shift and the Fox helmet, Fox goggles. I've kept my A-star deal. I believe I actually had an extra one more year left on my deal but I'm a lifer there. I'm so happy with those guys. It was my first-ever sponsor as a kid and I hope that I'll never leave..."

he's battling for wins now. "I mean, I have just an amazing group of people and it's fun," Reed grins. "It's not a team that I believe is out there to put it to the factory teams in the fact that we can do it bigger and better or whatever. I just think that it's a team that is appreciative of the freedom of what this team creates. We're stoked and happy to have support from Mitch and Bel-Ray and even the Honda guys are really being supportive of us and helping us.

"I think the fact that I hired one of their employees [his mechanic, Lars] that had been there for 10 plus years, I think they have a lot of respect for him and I think that he's the reason why I get some love from Honda. I think they trust him in the fact that anything that they do help us with it's not going to be shared with the wrong people, you know? So, I think they're respectful to our sponsors and to our people that support us. And so far we're succeeding and I think we're moving forward and we're getting better."

#### SMART**STUFF**

FITNESS FIRST.

One thing that you get with a smart veteran like Reed is that when starting this team he was able to compartmentalise what he could and couldn't control in such a short period of time before Anaheim 1.

"I just focused on doing what I had to do and I felt that coming into this season I needed to focus on being in shape," Reed says. "I felt that I wanted to take that next step. I wanted to be stronger and fitter and I really feel like my race pace and my race fitness and my endurance are better this year. I feel stronger in areas that I've been weak in in years past."

But this was a calculated choice. He knew he

But this was a calculated choice. He knew he couldn't get in shape easily once the season started but he could find better bike settings after the start of the season.

"I knew if I was fit going into Anaheim, Sunday morning I could have a conversation with the team and with Bones and with Mitch and be like 'hey, the bike needs to be better here, here and here, we're good here, here and here – let's make a plan to move forward to make that better'. I felt that that was more doable and much more realistic than me showing up at Anaheim and being 'man, I can't run 20 laps, I'm going to go and bust my ass this week and try and get fit'."

As his bike settings have come along, Reed has

As his bike settings have come along, Reed has become more comfortable. And with comfort has come speed.

"Chad Reed is a guy you have to worry about if he finds speed and he can find speed..." said Ryan Villopoto after the Atlanta Supercross where Reed battled with James Stewart until the final lap. "Now, we all have to worry about him..."

But more than anything, with riders like Chad Reed — and even Kevin Windham — the biggest thing that makes them fast is happiness. And Chad Reed is happy right now controlling his own destiny and doing his own thing...



# SXAPPEALI

TIGHT TRACKS, BIG EGOS AND SOME SERIOUSLY BAD BLOOD

MAKE FOR NON-STOP ACTION AS THIS YEAR'S SUPERCROSS

CHAMPIONSHIP CRASHES TOWARDS THE MIDWAY MARK...

fter four rounds of racing in the 2011 Monster Energy/AMA Supercross Championship two riders had risen to the top with Monster Energy Kawasaki's Ryan Villopoto and San Manuel Yamaha's James Stewart each winning

two rounds.

However, as things move forward, consistency becomes the exception rather than the rule for the top

guns in the championship.

With so much time off the bike prior to the 2011 season it's understandable that Stewart needed to get some races under his belt before he really started to shine.

At Anaheim 2 – the Breast Cancer Awareness race – Stewart starts to shine.

Stewart starts to simu.

Stewart gets the holeshot in the Main Event and although Villopoto is quickly into second place Stewart is just on it. Through a rhythm section JS's rhythm goes 3-4-4 while everyone else goes 3-3-3 onto a tabletop and then off over the last jump. Villopoto is actually faster through the turns and through most of the track but the rhythm section gains Stewart a slight advantage and the real place Stewart makes up time is in the whoops. Almost every lap Stewart puts a fraction of a second on Villopoto and at the end of the race although Villopoto isn't all that far back it's the most dominant performance of the year so far.

Villopoto finishes second ahead of Chad Reed who

Villopoto finishes second ahead of Chad Reed who grabs his first podium finish of the year. Reed has been working on his bike settings and things are starting to click. Justin Brayton is fourth and Trey Canard is fifth while, outside of Stewart's dominance, the biggest story of the race is defending champion Ryan Dungey's chain derailment early in the Main Event. Dungey scores one point for last place in the Main, losing valuable ground in the championship chase.

"I think I may have caused that," says Trey Canard after the race. "I have nothing but respect for Ryan [Dungey] but we were racing and I hit him in the left rear of the bike only like three turns before his chain came off. I feel horrible."

In the Lites class Josh Hansen has a massive crash in practice and breaks his left hand just above the pinky knuckle in what doctors refer to as a 'boxer's fracture'. Somehow, through pure grit and determination — both words that no-one in their right mind would've used to refer to Hansen in the past — he holds off Eli Tomac, Ken Roczen and Broc Tickle to win the Main Event despite the broken hand. Then, after the race, Hansen finds out he has damaged the fracture further by racing with it and it has to be re-set. But he can't go to the doctor to have it fixed until after the San Diego round which is two weeks away.

In a city named after an American hero called Sam Houston who made a habit of winning battles it's funny that it seems no-one wants to win the Main Event inside Reliant Stadium. Off the very short start and into the very slick first turn James Stewart, Chad Reed, Justin Brayton and much of the rest of the field find themselves on the ground while after a bad start Villopoto tip-toes through in order to stay up through the melee.

So who assumes the lead but Kevin Windham in the closest event he has to a hometown race. Windham begins to pull away in the tricky conditions – as he's prone to do – while Stewart, trying to recover from the first turn crash, lands on Jason Thomas through the track's tricky rhythm section and goes down a second time. This time Stewart damages his brake which causes his front wheel to stop spinning in the air. Smartly, he backs it down for an eventual 15th.

Windham looks to have the race under control out front until an uncharacteristic mistake sees him go down hard in the same rhythm lane that claimed Stewart a little earlier. Windham thinks he may have broken his arm but he definitely hits his head and he's out of the race, handing the lead to Canard who has never won an AMA 450cc Main.

Over the final 10 laps, though, Canard begins riding very tense and with two to go he gets passed by Dungey but he quickly passes Dungey back and puts his head down. Dungey puts in one last charge near the finish and squares the final turn of the race to try and pass Canard but Canard squeezes him down and almost off of the track in order to take his first ever win.

Dungey is second while Ryan Villopoto is third and reassumes the points lead. Davi Millsaps is fourth and Andrew Short scores the first top-five finish for the KTM 350SX-F in fifth as Ken Roczen makes a stunning 450cc debut on his own 350 to finish seventh.

Texas marks the premiere of the 2011 Lites East series and most in the know are talking about the inevitable battle between Justin Barcia and Dean Wilson. The two start out front and in typical Barcia style he begins running it in on Wilson whenever he sees an opportunity and since his reputation precedes him – with good reason – Wilson begins riding tight and eventually gets really bad armpump. Barcia goes on to win the race due to sheer intimidation while Wilson is second and his team-mate Blake Baggett is third.

San Diego can almost be called 'The House That Chad Built' – except that Qualcomm Stadium was built before Reed was born. Regardless, coming into the San Diego





# DONJOY KNEE BRACES AND COMPEX MUSCLE STIMULATORS, AS USED BY ANTONIO CAIROLI - MX1 GP WORLD CHAMPION



Andrew Short keeps coming up just, er, short on KTM's 350

class Josh Hansen has a much vith a two-week-old injury than he did

Former champ James Stewart is having to dig deep in the face of some serious opposition

Supercross, Reed's record as a full-time premier class racer here is 5-2 – that's five wins and two losses. And in the Main Event he shows why.

He grabs the holeshot but he's got Canard – fresh and brimming with confidence from his win in Houston – breathing down his neck. Canard scrubs the track's triple in the on-again, off-again rain and dives underneath Reed to take the lead and then begins to pull away before losing the front end in a tricky right-hander, gifting the lead back to Reed.

And from there Reed is never headed. He pulls away from James Stewart — who inherits second when Canard goes down — and then Canard goes down a second time, putting him in fourth behind Dungey. Stewart stalls his motorcycle, handing second to Dungey and Canard hangs on for fourth. Points leader Ryan Villopoto has a tough Main Event, going down on the opening lap and bending up his motorcycle badly. Still, he catches up to seventh to salvage his points lead and heads into Atlanta with three points to spare over Stewart.

In the Lites class Josh Hansen has a much tougher time with a two-week-old injury than he did with a fresh one. He has trouble holding on and fades in the Main Event from second to sixth but still holds the points lead by three points going into a two-month break from racing for the Lites West. Hansen gets his hand operated on two days after the race so he can be ready for the Lites West to resume when the time comes.

Out front rookie Eli Tomac puts on an absolute clinic. His lead grows every lap until the final lap when he nearly stops he's riding so carefully. He still wins by over 10 seconds over former world champ Tyla Rattray with his best-ever finish and third place goes to Tickle who is the closest to Hansen in the points. Ken Roczen is easily the fastest guy throughout the day and he wins his heat race for the first time in his career but he goes down in the first turn in the Main Event and that's that. He recovers for seventh.

The Atlanta Supercross has long been one of







GRAHAM JARVIS TOUGH ONES LITTLE BROTHER WINNER 2010



*செர்சாரா*ச

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Stewart tries everything but cannot make a pass stick on Reed who has found a lot of extra speed in the past few weeks. As the two head toward the white flag Reed dives under Stewart's team-mate Kyle Regal to put him a lap down and Stewart pounces, diving inside both of them and nearly putting Regal over the top of the berm.

Stewart takes the white flag but less than a half-a-lap later Reed makes his final push, diving to the inside of Stewart to block his line exiting a 180 degree turn and Stewart and Reed collide with both going down

As they lay in the track Ryan Villopoto rides by into the lead and they get up just in front of Ryan Dungey. Inexplicably, over the course of the final lap Stewart goes out of his way to try and knock

both to snatch second place while Reed - livid nearly jumps onto Stewart out of the final turn and takes third place. Stewart is fourth.

However, dropping from second to fourth in the race means that Villopoto just gained an extra four points in the title chase and leaves Atlanta up by 10 points over Stewart going into Daytona – a track that has not been kind to Stewart in the past.

In the Lites class Justin Barcia goes down in practice and fractures the tip of his right ulna but tapes it up and goes racing anyway. Barcia's team-mate Blake Wharton grabs the holeshot from the far outside after having to qualify through the LCQ and then he proceeds to lead the first 11 laps of the 15-lap event. Then he goes down on his own and remounts fourth, handing the lead to Dean Wilson who has just passed his way into second prior to the crash. Barcia inherits second and Baggett again finishes third. It marks Wilson's first-ever supercross victory and the 200th for Mitch Payton's Pro Circuit squad.

Wilson and Barcia are tied on top of the points



Justin Barcia wins the opening Lites East round



#### SERIES STANDINGS LITES EAST Ryan Villopoto Josh Hansen James Stewart 161 Broc Tickle Chad Reed 150 Eli Tomac 116 Trey Canard 96 146 Ryan Morais Ryan Dungey 145 Cole Seely 88 Andrew Short 110 83 Ken Roczen Brett Metcalfe 104 80 Tyla Rattray Justin Brayton 90 Martin Davalos 69 Davi Millsaps 88 James Decotis Ivan Tedesco Kyle Cunningham

Dean Wilson

Justin Barcia

Blake Baggett

Blake Wharton

Lance Vincent

Matt Lemoine

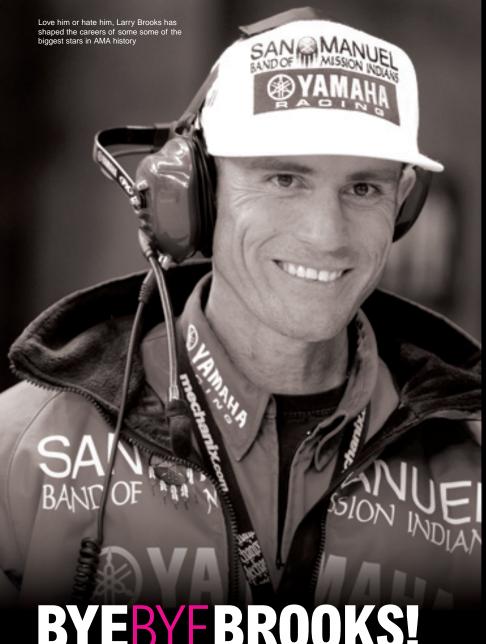
Alex Martin

Jason Anderson

Malcolm Stewart

Ryan Sipes





BYEBYE BROOKS!

WITH LARRY SEEMINGLY HISTORY, HOW COOL IS IT THAT TWO TEAN OWNERS ARE BATTLING IT OUT ON THE TRACK FOR THE WIN?

Words and photos by STEVE COX

here were probably some pretty good reasons why, at least for a while to start the season, James Stewart and Chad Reed started getting along better. They were together as the 'old guys' trying to fend off the young-gun onslaught of defending champ Ryan Dungey, Ryan Villopoto, Trey Canard and the rest. They were the proven talent whose capabilities had come into question after two equally horrible 2010 seasons. And they were both team owners, controlling their own destinies behind the desk as well as behind the handlebars.

Of course, the fact that Stewart was a  $\underline{\text{team}}$ owner wasn't that well-known at the time. In the off-season - when negotiating his deal with the San Manuel Yamaha team - Stewart wasn't finding the kind of income he wanted. So, as I understand it, he brought in some of his own sponsors - namely Red Bull - and essentially used that money to buy out Mike Kranyak, the 'M' in L&M Racing. Stewart controlled 51 per cent of the team at that point but when asked about it earlier in the year he would only say that the rest of the changes to the team structure were still under negotiation so he couldn't say much just yet.

Well, just before Atlanta the rumours really picked up, stating that Stewart had taken over Larry Brooks' portion of the team to become 100 per cent owner. And, sure enough, at Atlanta Brooks was nowhere to be seen. Stewart said Brooks was taking time off for family stuff but everyone else has disagreed with this take. Even Stewart's team-mate Kyle Regal said

Brooks was out before he apparently knew the party line to toe.

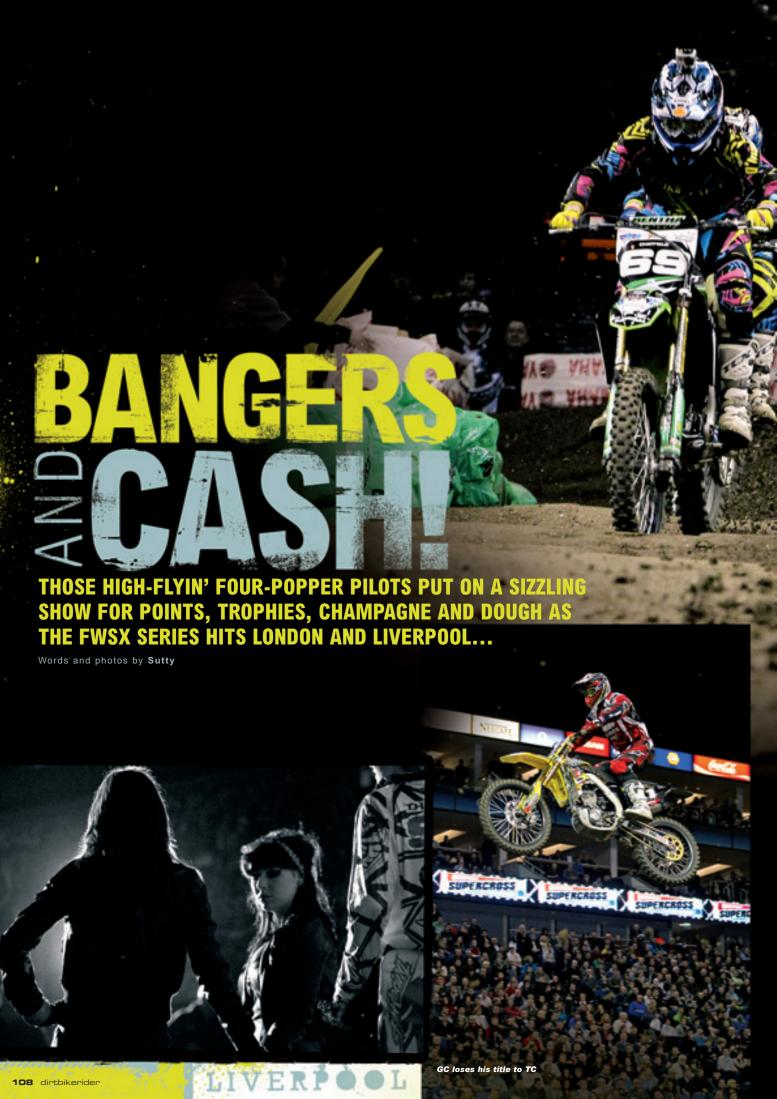
Last year, when working through a disagreement I had with Larry Brooks during my time at Racer X (I'd written about Stewart not talking to the press on the Racer X site and Brooks wanted my blood), I talked it through with Brooks and during the conversation he referred to himself almost with pride as the 'most hated man in the AMA pits'. I don't think that was accurate then – or now – but there are certainly some people who don't like Brooks. That being said, there are some people who definitely don't like me and I think I'm pretty frikkin' awesome so simply saying that some people don't like Brooks doesn't mean it's representative.

On the positive side, Larry Brooks was absolutely the racer's manager. He loved his racers and he backed his racers 100 per cent no matter what the racer did or didn't do. He backed Reed 100 per cent of the time and backed Stewart the same, at least in public. When dealing with the AMA, FIM, media or anything like that, any racer would love to have Brooks in their corner.

We don't know yet what precipitated Brooks' exit from the formerly named L&M (Larry and Mike) Racing team but we do know history. So while James Stewart obviously has full factory Yamaha support and Chad Reed is racing on a bike 99 per cent of which you can buy yourself if you have enough money, how cool is it that two team owners were battling for the win in Atlanta?

The face of racing is changing...







o you remember when foamin' Bob Wright chased down Bob Hannah at the end of the AMA Superbowl of Motocross on his booming B50-engined Bolton-mobile to take the win in front of 50,000 screaming fans? Or that time The Baron stuck it to Marty Tripes inside the LA Coliseum?

The chances are that unless you're on some pretty serious medication right now - like Geoff Walker is - you won't recall either of those things happening and quite rightly so because they never did. Wanna know why? Because CCM don't do supercross and even if they wanted to they never not once had an engine that fit within the realms of the rulebook - not that that fact normally stopped them...

Seriously though, times have changed and the CCM brand as we know it today is in fact now very supercross suitable – well, in the UK at least. Both Buildbase team riders Tom Church and Stephen Sword are excellent indoor racers while the overly-engineered rigid aluminium frame of their CMX450 has a steep steering angle and short wheelbase so - just like TC and Swordy - performs incredibly well in supercross surroundings.

After a festive break the British SX championship resumes in London's O2 Arena and despite only finishing

fourth in the British Open final in Belfast TC starts the second third of the season in the hot seat. But how?

Neither Odyssey winner Martin Barr or runner-up Brad Anderson are committed to the full Future West series and Adam Chatfield pops out a shoulder pulling a pick-up pass on Alex Snow in the head-to-heads so he's a non-starter for London's final too. Which means that the 29-year-old Wiltshireman is suddenly fast-tracked into the virtual series lead.

When the gate drops for the final it's perennial head-to-head hero Ashley Greedy who gets the drop on the pack with TC second ahead of young guns Jack Brunell and Steven Clarke. While Church has his hands full beating back the exuberant SX2 pilots Greedy makes a break for it and pulls out a comfortable lead as the laps wind down to eventually take a solid victory and establish himself as a contender to take the title too. Meanwhile, TC goes back and forth with Brunell for far too long before finally coming out on top in the scrap for second place honours on the night.

With just two points separating Church and Greedy in the British Open title chase tensions are running high headed into the Liverpool finale, especially after some early evening shenanigans starring Greedy and Clarkey that results in the pair getting a right royal

AM DRAM!
ALL THE HIGH-OCTANE DRAMA AND

While the amateur and youth racers aren't fighting it out for huge cash prizes that doesn't stop them from giving 100 per cent in their chase for championship glory.

One young gun who really shines this winter is James Dunn who dominates the Clubman Open class by going three wins for three while also running 2-1-1 in the Youth Lites division to take that title too. A big crash in the O2 during the Clubman Lites Main kills any chances he has of taking that championship which

chances he has of taking that championship which allows Dan Brough to sneak it simply through being ultra consistent all season long – well done that man. The 85cc classes are disappointingly pretty poorly supported this year although the race action is still sublime. Ben Watson takes the Supermini title one round early after dominating in Belfast and London so doesn't turn out for round three in Liverpool while in the SW85cc division Gradie Featherstone goes three for three and even sticks it to the Supermini pilots in the season finale as well. It's hard to say whether that come from behind win over Max Acres is the highlight of his season or the fact that he's the only small-wheeler to jump the finish-line triple in the O2 as both feats coax huge cheers from the massive crowds.

After Dylan Woodcock and Harry Kimber share firsts and seconds at the opening two rounds the scene is set for a winner-takes-all finale. And what a scrap it is as the slightly faster Kimber stuffs up the start, charges through the pack and then crashes after taking over the lead. But it's not over yet as the Twisted 7 teamster picks himself up and closes the gap on Woodcock until on the last lap he's in a position to make an all-or-nothing move.

After launching himself into the side of the Cobra star just two corners from home it's Kimber who has to pick himself up off the dirt as the cool-headed Cobra rider continues on his way to cross the line and in doing so adds the 65cc title to the Auto one he took back in 2009

The class that attracts the biggest numbers is the Autos division and after three hard fought for finals it's Callum Beeken who claims the championship win. Running 2-1-2 through the series, the KTM rider who's spent the winter winning races in Florida edges out Southport's Finley Beard to take the title.

# FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

ubman open		
James Dunn	KTM	75
Mark Perfect	KTM	49
Ryan Williams	KTM	36
UBMAN LITES		
Dan Brough	KTM	64
James Dunn	KTM	61
Luke Norris	Kawasaki	37
UTH LITES		
James Dunn	KTM	72
Mark Perfect	KTM	48
Luke Norris	Kawasaki	44
PERMINI		
Ben Watson	KTM	50
Max Acres	KTM	47
Scooter Webster	KTM	37
cc SW		
Gradie Featherstone	KTM	75
Matt Lomas	Suzuki	53
Mitchell Lewis	Honda	22
CC		
Dylan Woodcock	Cobra	72
Harry Kimber	Kawasaki	69
Connor Ellis	KTM	49
<b>TOS</b>		
Callum Beeken	KTM	69
Finley Beard	KTM	63
	James Dunn Mark Perfect Ryan Williams Dan Brough James Dunn Luke Norris DUTH LITES James Dunn Mark Perfect Luke Norris PERMINI Ben Watson Max Acres Scooter Webster CC SW Gradie Featherstone Mat Lomas Mitchell Lewis CC Dylan Woodcock Harry Kimber Connor Ellis TOS Callum Beeken	James Dunn Mark Perfect Ryan Williams WBMAN LITES Dan Brouph James Dunn Luke Norris WTM Mark Perfect Luke Norris WTM Luke Norris WTM Mark Perfect Luke Norris WTM Scooter Webster CCSW Gradie Featherstone Matt Lomas Mitchell Lewis Mitchell Lewis CCC Dylan Woodcock Harry Kimber Connor Ellis CCIUM CCIUM CCON CCONT

PONDOM NUMBER







# PASS OF THE SERIES? MATT 'BIGFOOT' BAYLISS BLOWIN' BY

So I'm watching some AMA supercross online t'other night and Ralph Sheehan and Fro Daddy are getting all excited about a pass that Chad Reed makes on Andrew Short. Basically, Skippy scrubs his way past Shorty over a triple and powers away, job done! Impressive pass and all but not a patch on the oh-so similar move that Matt Bayliss pulls on Tony Cuddy during a heat race in the O2.

Bayliss - a former Youth and Clubman SX champ - has been super-impressive indoors this year and genuinely looks super-relaxed in the Pro classes as he throws around his CRF250 while running just off the pace of the leaders which is hella impressive considering he hasn't even registered on the majority of most peoples' moto-radars just yet.

Anyway, after catching up Cuddy – who's no slouch either –
Matt scrubs the finishline triple and blows right by Tony who this point can't quite believe he's being undertaken over a 70 foot triple. In fact, it seems like he's still struggling to comprehend what's just happened when he lands because more or less straight away he tucks the front end while braking for the next right-hander and goes down like a sack o' spuds.

So, forget about ramming your competition out of the way or block-passin' them into submission because that's so last season. Apparently, the new way to get ahead is to simply blow by them so quickly that it psyches them out to a level where they topple over.





rollicking from the ACU. It definitely subdues 'em both as an off-form Clarke calls it quits early doors and Greedy takes a sound beating from Snowy in the head-to-heads.

While almost everybody thinks Swordy's only in Liverpool to ride shotgun for his CCM team-mate he says different on the startline when I ask him about it. "Nah, I'm here to win," says the Scotsman coldly before breaking out into a smile. And to punctuate that point the #2 CCM launches off the line and into the lead when the gate drops while TC gets sideswiped by Snowy and very nearly goes down.

Greedy gets away badly n'all and as the pack clears turn two the title contenders are bar-to-bar in the back of the pack - not that they'll stay there for long. While Swordy starts sneaking away from Brunell and Snow, TC bumps n' grinds his way by Greedy,

soon-to-be-dethroned champ Gordon Crockard, two-smokin' Carl Brogden and Chatfield to find himself fourth by mid-race.

Sword, meanwhile, is still way out front with his pre-race prophecy turning out to be true as TC lunges by Snow and baulks Brunell to take second as the laps run down. But with the title in sight Tom runs off the track and gets stuck behind some tuff blocks but luckily he's able to free himself and get back on track in third place as only Chatfield can take advantage of his error. And that's how it all ends - CCM take their first SX Main Event thanks to Swordy and first championship title courtesy of Church in third.

"I'm so pleased to have won it for CCM," says a delighted Church. "I was confident before the race but nearly lost it all when I collided with Snowy off the line. I was able >>



WATSON'S WAY!
MARK WATSON ENDS UP ON TOP IN A THREE-WAY
FOUR-WHEEL FIST-FIGHT TO THE FINISH...

If Mark Watson were able to curb his enthusiasm and keep it on four wheels more often there's no doubt at all that the 25-year-old Cumbrian builder would have won all three rounds of this winter's FWSX series. Luckily for us race fans though the former sidecarcross grand prix passenger makes a real hash of round one in Belfast and can only finish fourth which means he has to attack all out in both the London and Liverpool Main Events if

he's gonna win his first Future West championship title. An easy gate-to-flag win for Watson in the O2 sets up what could be a thrilling championship finale in Liverpool as just three points separate the leading three riders - Northern Ireland's Jonny Kelly heads the pack on 45, fellow Ulsterman Michael McAneney has 44 and Watson's one further back – which means it's a winner-takes-all finale in the Echo Arena.

Brad Frost stirs things up a bit by taking the holeshot on his Yamaha although Watson and his KTM soon bully their way past. Provided he can stay orange side up it's obvious that Mark has the speed to run away from the pack. As the laps run down McAneney and Kelly get stuck into a battle for third which slows them down allowing Frost to keep hold of the runner-up position.

When the chequers is unfurled it's Watson who wins by a quarter lap to take the title n'all while Frost comes home second and McAneney beats Kelly into third - in the race and the final championship standings.



#### FINAL SERIES STANDINGS 68 64 63 Mark Watson Michael McAneney KTM Jonny Kelly



to come through strong though and aside from that little bobble near the end had it all under control."

With the British Open title in the bag there's just the small matter of the SX1 crown to tie up before TC's done for the night. With wildcard Evgeny Bobryshev taking honours at round one and equally wild wildcard Shaun Simpson doing the same at round two, by finishing runner-up twice TC has a healthy 15-point championship lead headed into the final round. And with no pressure on he absolutely dominates, running rings around everybody around the ever roughening Dirt Wurx-built Echo Arena circuit to take his first final win and second championship of the night some 21 points clear of runner-up Crockard who edges out Brunell by just one point.

Brunell has his own moment of glory as he captures the Pro SX2 title in an incredible manner. With initial series leader Chatfield putting himself out of the London Main Events Brunell only has to ride consistently to sit on a comfortable

lead heading into the finale but the racer in him takes over and he buries himself in the whoops while leading the final which is eventually won by Mike Brown.

With Brunell only scoring 11 points for his 10th place finish Ash Greedy and MVR-D Honda's Nev Bradshaw share the series lead on 35 points while Brunell slides back to third on 33 - eight clear of Chatfield who could still feasibly win the whole shebang if he returns with a bang in Liverpool.

Between races Bradshaw retires from the series with a hand injury meaning it's a winner-takes-all battle for first between Brunell on the Rabbit Racing Kawasaki and Greedy on the similarly green Maxxis Henderson LPE machine.

The decider's actually a little on the dull side as Brunell rides the race of his life, yanking the holey then running 15 perfect laps to take a deserved win ahead of Greedy who's unable to get anywhere close enough to dish out his usual kind of no-holds-barred, testosterone-fuelled overtaking manoeuvre.

# FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

#### BRITISH OPEN

2007 title

	iom Cnurch
2	Ashley Greedy
2	lack Brunell

PRO SX1 Tom Church Gordon Crockard

#### Jack Brunell PRO SX2

1	.lack	Brune	e//

2	Asniey	Greeay
2	Adami	Chatfiel

Buildbase CCM	60
Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki	53
Rabbit Racing Kawasaki	45
D !! !!	00

48 47 TAS Suzuki Rabbit Racing Kawasaki

Rabbit Racing Kawasaki Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki 57 Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki





# TONUS AND DESALLE KICK OFF 2011 ON TOP IN FRANCE AS THE MX WORLD GETS AN EARLY GLIMPSE OF WHO'S DONE WHAT OVER THE WINTER...



common practice ground before the start of the various national championships sprinkled around Europe, the pre-season internationals are a good way for teams and riders to measure themselves against their main opponents and check who's done their homework during the winter.

Valence in France is one of the preferred events for the world championship's top teams to present their new bikes, sponsors, riders, staff, trucks, kit, girlfriends and other gadgets. Having said that, one of the main absentees this year is the Red Bull Teka KTM team who are doing their traditional photoshoot in the south of Spain although team representative and current world WMX champion Steffi Laier shows up for another battle with her arch-rival Livia Lancelot who's now back on the Kawasaki under the Bud Racing team awning.

Also missing is the Yamaha Monster Energy team which opts to race the Mantova Starcross International in Italy held on the same weekend. Even so, Steven Frossard – one of the team's MX1 riders – is at the gate for his debut on a 450 and the talented Frenchman is the fastest in Saturday's practice.

British interest is knocked back a couple of notches by the double DNS from the CLS Monster Energy Kawasaki Pro Circuit team – aka Max Anstie and Tommy Searle. Both Brits are initially entered but their ultra-prepped 250Fs aren't, er, ultra-prepped in time. While we're on the subject of the Brits, the weather can't be more like at home with rain from Saturday night up until Sunday lunchtime leaving track conditions looking kinda familiar.

Proppa.com KTM and DB Honda Racing come back from winter shakedown testing in Spain to race Valence and Elliott Banks-Browne's looking super-sharp, holeshoting the second moto and leading the entire field for a couple of laps. Elliott eventually finishes fifth overall and his new team-mate James Cottrell cards 11th.

The surprise 'Brit' is MVR-D Honda's Matiss Karro who has

a solid ride, finishing third overall right behind Nicolas Aubin and the new UK import Arnaud Tonus on the Bike it Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha. This year Aubin's following Mickael Pichon's advice in his last chance to show what he's capable of in the MX2 class. The French and Swiss riders battle practically all Sunday with both winning a moto each although it's Tonus who ends up winning the MX2 overall after Aubin suffers a technical problem during the super final. Euro 125cc champion Jordi Tixier finishes in fourth.

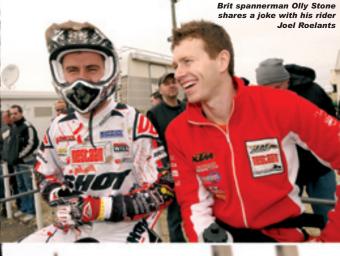
World vice-champ Clement Desalle claims both MX1 races but is denied a triple in the super final when a stone gets in the rear brake of his RM-Z450 and causes him to slip off. Looking good on his new YZ450FM, Frossard ends the day in second ahead of a revived Sebastien Pourcel who is involved in some exciting battles for the podium.

It's clear to see in Valence that a couple of ex-factory KTM riders are looking much more relaxed on their new red machinery, especially LS Motors Honda's Shaun Simpson who has three consistent motos to secure fourth position in the overall results. Rui Goncalves – riding alongside Evgeny Bobryshev in the Honda World Motocross team – looks like he's still working on set-up and both he and his Russian team-mate spend much of the weekend deep in discussion with Japanese technicians.

KRT Kawasaki's Xavier Boog is out of luck again and goes home with a fractured tibia and Proppa.com's Nathan Parker is lucky to escape injury when he crashes hard. Nez and new team-mate Martin Barr look in no rush to hang it out around the slippery French circuit and finish 24th and 25th overall.

Among the British riders and teams in the paddock is ex-CCM racing mechanic Olly Stone who's decided to follow his dream of becoming a truly international spanner spinner and is now Joel Roelants' mechanic at the Martens KTM team. Olly doesn't mince words. "Bring me DBRs and send me some pictures..." Well Olly, seeing as you asked so nicely...













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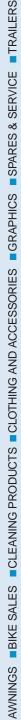
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# EFIGHTERS!

WITH FIVE TOP SERIES TO GO FOR, RAGE PREVIEWS THE BIG HITTERS IN THE YOUTH DIVISION...

ith the youth national cork just about to go pop simultaneously this weekend - March 12/13 - at both Brampton and Mallory it's time for a last-gasp, scratch your head preview once again.

As usual the youth competition choices on offer are staggering - BYMX, EYC, BSMA Wulfsport Masters and Maxxis MXY2 - and looking across the board at all championships the venues are also absolute choice picks with the likes of Desertmartin, Canada Heights, Hawkstone Park, Lyng, Foxhill, Wakes Colne, Whitby and Landrake on offer.

Digging down into the various rider entry lists it's plain to see that the MCF and the BSMA have sold their big idea particularly well and they are both rewarded with a full order book of youth talent.

The BSMA have also introduced an Auto class where eight-year-old Sam Davis from Stourport on Severn could well be the top tip along with fellow West Midlander Lewis Pyne. Also watch out for young Robbie Scott together with James Hyett, Jack Scally and Toby Potter.

Moving on to the 65s and what a prospect with no absolute nailed-on favourites as in past years, just endless options for the moto win. Once again taking a shufti right across the board you can expect quality winning shows from Alexander Brown, Jed Etchells, Harry Kimber, Owen Woodhouse, Jack Booker and Dylan

Woodcock. And very hot on their heels are Jaydon Murphy, Oliver Costerdine, Josh Greedy, Charlie Kent, Harry Wichman, Christopher Mills, Rossi Beard, Matthew Pocock, Archie Osmaston and Jordan Hearn.

Trying to pick the ultimate champions from that lot ain't easy but for me it should be either Manxman Etchells or Scotsman Brown in BYMX, Brown, Kimber or Woodhouse in the EYC and Booker, Kimber or possibly young Kenty in the BSMA.

In the 85cc smallies division KTM-mounted Conrad Mewse and Sid Evans on the Twisted 7 Kawasaki bash plastics again. It's a repeat of the '09 classic 65s battle and could turn into the highlight of the racing year but only on BYMX days however as Conrad bolts in the Big Wheels for the EYC and BSMA gig. Sid sticks with the small set season-long and a winning double or even treble ain't out of the question.

If you're looking for a quality challenge in the division Henry Williams is really good to go right now together with the second member of the Twisted 7 SW squad, David Keet. Jordan Eccles is also sure to be in and around the podium chase as are a gaggle of last year's upgrades headed by Albie Wilkie, Keenan Hird and Taylor Hammal. The prediction for this one? If you can get the better of either Mewse or Evans you definitely have a future in the sport.

It's stating the plainly obvious I know but

Ben Watson really is a hot favourite in 2011. The hottest of the hot in fact as the 85cc BW section looks a tad light in comparison to recent years. Watson will be itching to put last year's mechanical ill-fortunes well behind him and he goes again on the HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK machine. Maximum grief for Watson? Most likely in the shape of the Honda 150F crew led by Rob Davidson, Jack Gardner and Oli Osmaston. The two-stroke challenge? His best mucka Tom Neal, Liam Knight and Jack Eldridge. Also keep your eyes on Matty Callaghan, Josh Gilbert, Curtis Blamey and Fraser Viner.

Looking in the crystal ball a Watson double

pokes me in the eye straight away - if he doesn't have Euro date clashes - with Gardner, Knight and Blamey carving up the glory on BSMA and Wulfsport Masters days.

Ex big-wheelers moving up to trade heavier punches in the various 125cc smoker classes this year include Ben Howell. Sam Winterburn. Jordan Godwin, Connor Clark and Husqvarna-mounted Corie Southwood. Expect quality sparks to fly whenever they all get together with the BSMA clash looking well tasty. On BYMX and RBPN weekends youth are up against seasoned adults but Howell looks in good shape for the BSMA silverware.

Ryan Houghton on the HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK bike along with Bradley Pocock, Jamie McCanney, Nathan Watson, Jordan Divall,

Lewis Pvne

James Dunn, Dan Thornhill and Jake Shipton begin the year as my top picks for ultimate glory across the different codes in the Open class. Houghton will be attempting to repeat Connor Walkley's BYMX/Maxxis MXY2 winning double of last term - and I think he will – but if Pocock, Watson and McCanney all bring their A game it will be a classic season.

Along with the already mentioned you can add the names of Liam Garland and Adam Sterry as possible heat winners with the ACU and EYC championships looking equally strong. Having said that there is even more talent with the likes of young Irishman Conor Campbell, Twisted 7's James Harrison, Jack Kelly, Robbie Muscat, Jake Millward, Luke Newman, Damon Brooks and Ryan McClean in the combined mix.

In the BSMA MXY2 championship look out for a tidy scrap at the sharp end featuring Divall, Jay Thomas and this winter's 14-year-old sensation Tommy Alba. Across in the Wulfsport Masters MXY2 series it could well turn out to be a re-run of last year's competition with reigning champion Dan Thornhill going bar to bar with James Dunn. This time around however both guys are KTM-mounted. The main Suzuki challenge will come from Luke Dean with Jay Thomas,

Jordan Godwin, Adam Darbyshire and Damon

Wales producing the extra Wulfsport oomph.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

RYANHOUGHTON

t's all set up to be a very important year for Ryan Houghton who began and finished last term looking very much like the real deal at Leuchars and Cusses Gorse in the BYMX Youth Open section. The bit in the middle however following the broken bones suffered at Norley proved to be a frustrating time.

This year will be his final fling in youth competition and Houghton will be looking to add to his '09 BW title success, peaking with a repeat of Connor Walkley's ACU double of last vear - BYMX and MXY2. And he's also launching himself head-long into the full-on world of pro racing on RBPN days.

As a family the Houghtons are professional in all they do - and the new deal for 2011 sees them switch from Danger UK over to Red Bull KTM UK with the HM Plant team.

So with the championship season just about to kick into life Rage asked Ryan to reflect on matters MX...

Rage: It seemed at the back end of 2010 you had a difficult but also exciting and pleasant set of decisions to make for 2011 - following much consideration what persuaded you to plump for HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK?

Ryan: "I was in a very fortunate position and had several quality offers on the table from different manufacturers. But my heart is with KTM and it all fell into place with HM Plant. Sometimes things are just meant to be. I had been with Danger UK for two years and Percy has been absolutely fantastic and I would like to thank him but I feel this is the time to move on and another door is opening."

Rage: It's early days right now but what's the best thing so far about the new team? Ryan: "Gotta say the best thing so far is the new bike and getting to be around riders of the quality of Jake Nicholls for a team training

session. It's amazing how much I can learn from them. Jake and I have become good friends and he has helped me. We hook up for riding whenever possible."

Rage: How often do you get to be a part of the full KTM team training session?

Ryan: "As a youth satellite rider to the main team it's just as and when it all fits in with their worldwide travel arrangements really - but there should be a few good sessions at regular intervals throughout the year."

Rage: You mentioned the bike earlier - is it pretty much a stock machine with a few special bits bolted on?

Ryan: "The main race machine for this year is an ex-Jake bike from last year. Apart from the changed suspension it's pretty much as Jake rode it. The plan at the moment is to alternate between that bike and another race bike."

Rage: Horses for courses then? Ryan: "Yeah that's the plan - mix and match see how it all pans out."

Rage: "Talking of plans for the year Ryan, the racing schedule looks well busy with BYMX, MXY2 and Red Bull Pro Nationals on the agenda. What are your thoughts on pro racing? Ryan: "Yeah for sure a whole new big challenge. It's going to be tough I know but at the same time I'm looking forward to it - I'm dipping my toe in the water at the Red Bull Pro meetings to get a taste for riding with some top guys. I had a feel of it at last year's MX323 round at Blaxhall and it was awesome, can't wait to get out there again - chasing down some big reputations will be fun. I will see how the year goes but I would also like to do a couple of rounds in the Dutch ONK to get a bit of European experience too."





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# JACKATTACK!

ooking back at a few of the previous years' BW85cc championships it's almost the norm to find riders who surge up the rankings to ultimately grab a slice of the season's glory.

Think back to Sam Davis and Richie Worrall in '07, Brad Pocock in '08, Nathan Watson in '09 and, of course, Adam Sterry last year. All of them either over-turned strong pre-season favourites or went very close to doing so. This year Ben Watson begins as the absolute top tip but make no mistake the challenge will be full-on again this year, just as it was last term.

One other item to note with that list of guys apart from Worrall - the use of the awesome Honda 150F powerplant. Jack Gardner is no stranger to the F power and has been one of those youth riders who have upgraded early throughout his career. This has kept him under the radar but you can expect him to fully break cover with a bang in 2011.

Jack has been high-profile this winter with club class wins just about everywhere so Rage decided to have a word...

Rage: Hi Jack, can you tell Rage how you got into the sport?

Jack: "There's a long family tradition in MX. My grandpa raced in the '40s and '50s, he was a member of the Royal Signals team with Brian Leask among others. Dad also raced in the '70s and '80s being a top AMCA racer and he has been long-time friends with the Harrison brothers, Paul and Steve, who were both top racers back in the day. I started messing around on a bike at three in the back garden and racing began



Hometown: Northampton Bike: MX World Honda Height: 5ft 7in Weight: 9st

Fave pro: Ken Roczen Fave youth rider: Adam Sterry Food and drink: Spag bol and Lucozade Sport

Best mates in the paddock: Matt Harrison, Alex Meadows, Rob Davidson, Matty Callaghan, Connor Clark, Tom Neal.

Fave three national tracks: Whitby, Hawkstone Park, Dean Moor

Best school subject: PE Worst school subject: English Best thing about MX: Winning Worst thing about MX: Having to wait a full week to race again Full list of sponsors: MX World, Lee Goldsmith, Cosworth, Scott, Maxima,

Acerbis, Dunlop, HGS, Vortex, Hammerhead, Splitscreen, Lightspeed, NGK, DID and Renthal

with the Cotswold club at six."

Rage: Looking back down the years Jack what have been the racing high points? Jack: "I have won Auto and 65cc championships with the Cotswold club and an another 65cc title at the Northampton club. In 2006 I was a member of the Hanson Racing team with Alfie Smith and Scott Elderfield. My best finishes that year were a second place at BYMX Matchams in the final race and I took a win at Culham. As soon as the 150F came to the market I switched from KTM. The first year was all about getting used to the bike then I moved straight into BWs in '08. In '09 I finished third in the BSMA championships and won the BSMA finals last year."

Rage: How are the final preps going for this year? And what's going to be the main championship focus?

Jack: "This is my fifth year on the Honda and I feel so at home with it now. Jason and the team at MX World have built me the ultimate machine for this year - the fastest I've ever ridden - and following a bit of testing I just can't wait for the big kick-off. BYMX and EYC are the two main aims, we have also entered BSMA and Masters and I will race there when there are no date clashes."

Rage: Finally Jack, a bit of fun with this one if you could dream up your fantasy photo for a centre page magazine spread what would it be?

Jack: "Definitely me in that one at the St Jean D'Angely MXdN jumping the uphill triple passing Ken Roczen on the way!"

# KINGPINI

ast month we interviewed Harry Kimber who we think will be one of the favourites for the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup 65cc class and this month we've having a look at the SW85cc class.

There are a few guys capable of winning races in this class with the likes of new kids on the block Keenan Hird, Ryan Vickers and Taylor Hammal all moving up from the 65cc class to trade blows with second season runners such as David Keet. And there's another young rider who's been making great strides over the winter months and could be set for good things in 2011 and that's Billy King.

Billy's been working hard over the winter and earning himself some well-deserved results. He got off to a flying start recently at the SSMXC championship opener where, on a wet and muddy track, he won the overall in a combined 85cc class showing all the big wheel boys how it's done. We spoke with Billy and his dad Paul about his preparations for this year and what he's been doing differently and this is what they had to say...

Billy has always been fast but struggled to break the top 10 last year - what was the main reason for this?

Paul: "Billy struggled with getting good starts last year and as a result had to work his way through the pack. In the lower classes this wasn't so much of an issue but with the level of competition in the 85cc class you need to get good starts.

Rage: So what have you been doing to improve your starts for 2011?

Billy: "I've been working hard on how to position myself better and I have been training hard by doing boxing training which should make me stronger going into the first turn."

e: What else have you been doing in the winter to help prepare for the 2011 championship?

Billy: "Well I have been riding a lot and luckily I get to practice at Somerset practice track regularly. I have been working on my fitness. I also spend as much time riding my BMX or motocross bike as possible. I don't know why but I love riding in mud which has helped my bike skills."

What are your goals for this year? Billy: "I would like to finish regularly in the top 10 for 2011 and be as near to the front as possible."





# RUNNINGHO

#### IT'S IN THE MID-30s DOWN UNDER WHERE BILLY'S SWEATING OUT

#### THE LAPS SO HE CAN COME OUT FIGHTING FOR THE NATIONALS...

ebruary has been wide open and blisteringly hot! Riding has been tough in the heat but when you see the improvements each day it makes you keep working – it's tough though, sometimes the heat gets up to the mid 30s out in the desert. Regular trips to the chemist for glucose and electrolyte powders are a must, otherwise you can lose three or four kilos in weight just from sweating.

Today I woke up after a gruelling day's riding and was 79kg, the lowest I've ever been! I didn't know how to take it at first - normally I'm up around 84kg which is like my 'safe' weight. I never really go over or below that weight, it's always around the same, so when I saw 79kg on the scales I had to ask myself a few questions. 'Do I feel good?' Yes! 'Is training okay?' Yes! 'Can I complete the motos without feeling too tired?' Yes!

That's all I really care about at the moment and if those things still continue to go well then there's no reason to question anything just crack on and keep doing what I'm doing. I feel lighter and stronger than I did last year and on the bike I can feel within me that I can push harder for longer.

Riding has been going really good this month and I've been building my minutes up each day and practising the sprint formats for the first round. The sprint formats are pretty hard in the heat and it's horrible sitting there in your sweaty gear waiting for the five minutes in between to be up. I've also been doing 35-minute motos so when I do the sprints when I hit the 15-minute mark it feels like I'm just getting into it and working the track out only to be stopped mid-session!

Keith has hit terra firma back in the UK now after doing a week's stint with Johnny Rea down in Philip Island doing his manfriend thang although he's not really a manfriend, more a manforce! He just carries the force with him all the time. I also got to catch up with my old training buddy Leon Haslam and Kirk while they were over here the weeks leading up to the race. It was great to see everyone as I was starting to miss home a little. So I've had quite a lot of company the past couple months and it's now back to H and me in our cosy little love shack which is pretty nice and relaxing!

I got whisked off on a little Valentine weekend away too which is always a welcome break. Australia is so easy for holidays - nice weather, nice beaches, you can literally have a holiday any weekend within a two-hour drive.

So we hit the beach and had a little holiday home right near the water, enjoyed some red wine and good food with gorgeous sunshine and clear blue seas!

We recently had the launch of the 2011 MX nationals down in Sydney. It's a pretty cool thing to do for the series - all the teams rock up and have a test on one of the national tracks. We all do our thing to promote the series and get to test our bikes, catch up with everyone and have a good time. There was a BBQ, a freshly watered track, all the TV and press guys were there so we did some fun interviews and checked out all the new rigs and bikes. It was a good thing to be part of. You can check out the videos on YouTube if you search out the links.

We have a brand new set-up for this year as I may have mentioned before. We're the full Monster Energy Kawasaki team here in Oz and our graphics and posters etc are so much cooler than last year's. We're using the same design as the factory Kawasaki bike in the States and the new semi truck is fully wrapped in the Monster Kawasaki colours and looks so cool! It makes me excited to be a part of everything and I can see the team growing each week with the work Troy and the mechanics are doing.

We have loads of great sponsors coming on and I get on real well with my new team-mates. We have a new MX2 guy called Phil Nicoletti who is cool. He's been in the States riding with Zach and Jas before he come over so it was fun to swap stories with him and find out how Jas has been getting on. Dean I already know from last year and he's a cool guy and a hard worker - I'm sure he's gonna be fast this year.

Guys, I'm really sorry there's not a lot to talk about. I haven't really had anything funny or weird happen to me this month - it's been all work and no play! The only things that come to mind are the things I've been doing round the house! While Harriet is at work and I'm left at home I find myself feeling a bit house proud and being a proper little house husband. I always have the Hoover out and always do the washing!

Hope you are all good back home, I'm really looking forward to racing the British GP in August! I need to try and contain the excitement -

there's really nothing like riding a British GP!



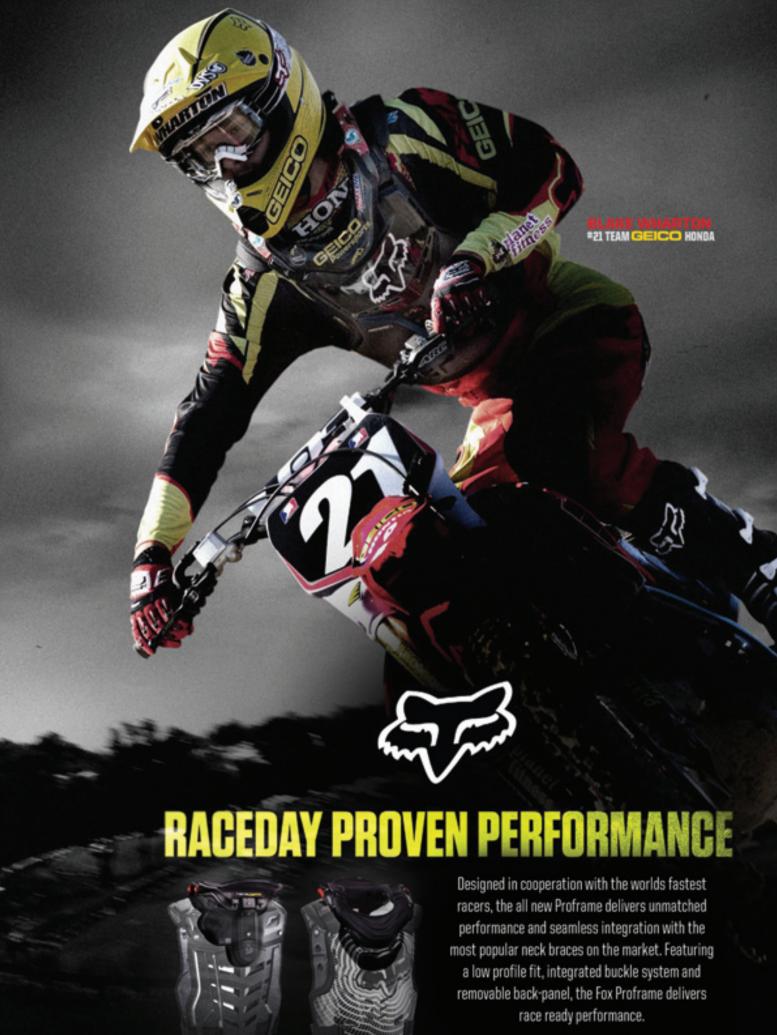












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or some it's the sight of a swallow dancing across the crisp evening sky, for others it's a splash of surprise colour as the first crocuses, daffodils and snowdrops burst into bloom. But from my lofty perch at DBR Towers, looking down onto Morecambe's main drag, it's the first fleeting glimpse of deliciously dimpled white flesh on an under-dressed woman that brings me the glad tidings. Oh yes, spring has finally sprung!

Of course, Morecambe being Morecambe you can tell just about everything you need to know about the time of year from dimpled flesh on an under-dressed woman. If it's white it's spring, lobster-red then it's summer, goose-pimpled means autumn and if the dimpled flesh is safely hidden away then chances are it's winter. Naturally, there are exceptions - year-round spray tans or sessions on the electric beach can throw up some confusion and dimpled flesh is always on display on Friday and Saturday nights no matter what the season. But, purely for the purpose of this column, at this moment in time I'm feeling slightly queasy at the sight of dimpled white flesh so the new season must finally be upon us.

I know, I know, I don't really need Morecambe's mini-skirted maidens to tell me it's time for the 2011 season to be kickstarted into life. As soon as we wrap up this very issue vou're holding in your hands and send it whistling down the wire to our printers, Sutty and I will be getting ready to hit the road for Little Silver and the opening round of the Maxxis. It's a bloody long way but not exactly hard to find - just keep heading south and when you get to the end of the M5 you're just about there.

Last year's opening round was pretty damn hardcore. Little Silver was chosen for its pillow-biting ability to soak up Mother Nature's worst excesses but even then the pretty much old-school Devon track ended up tougher than a Saturday night in Tripoli. The forecast for this weekend is much more positive than it was 12 months ago so hopefully we'll get some good weather, great racing and a healthy crowd of spectators.

This year's two main domestic championships the Maxxis and the Red Bull Pro Nationals - promise to be the best in a long time with a great mix of fast foreign imports, buck-wild throttle-happy youngsters and wily (but still super-quick) old pros all locking horns at a shedload of classic tracks. Faced with a 560-mile round trip the temptation to stay in bed on Sunday morning could be over-whelming – but this year's opener is a race not to be missed.

The week after that we'll be braving the elements at Back Cowm Quarry when Steve Ireland's WOR stages The Tough One. It's a new time of year and a new venue for the T1 but certainly not a new venue to me. I had my first trial at Back Cowm Quarry in March 1978 and for the next 10 years was a regular visitor to the guarry, high on the moors over-looking Rochdale. It's been a long time since I've been back so I'm looking forward to going and also looking forward to catching up with some old trials riding mates who I haven't seen for a long, long time.

The weekend after the Tough One it's time for our first visit of the year to Hawkstone Park for the big pre-season international and then the week after that it's all the way down to Kent for round two of the Maxxis series at the awesome Canada Heights circuit. That's March over with and then we barrel straight into April with the opening round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals at FatCat Moto Parc. It's a flat-out schedule for sure but I wouldn't have it any other way...

The excitement this month of the new season getting under way has, however, been off-set by the sad news that our Marketing Manager 'Slick' Rick Wilkinson is leaving us for a job dahn the Big Smoke. At the risk of getting all bromantic I know I speak for everyone at DBR when I say we'll all miss the Mancunian muppet loads and wish

him the very best of luck in his new career as a rent bo sorry Senior International Circulation Executive for IPC Media...





offer whole-hearted congratulations to British MXdN team member Dean Wilson who won his first ever AMA Supercross Lites Main Event in Atlanta, Georgia. The young Scot had a peach of a race to come through the pack and claim a solid victory ahead of his nemesis Justin Barcia. Wilson and Barcia now share the lead in the East Coast championship. Well in Deano!

Another Brit deserving a hearty pat on the back is Buildbase CCM's Tom Church who tied up both the British Open and SX1 championships in an exciting finale to the Future West championships held in Liverpool's Echo Arena. Berkshire lad Jack Brunell also tasted championship victory by snatching the title away from Ashley Greedy. All in all it's a great end to a great series

It's a mixed month for Tommy Searle who leads home the MX2 pack in his first international race of the year at Lacapelle Marival then finds out he probably won't be getting the \$18,000 No Fear owe him in the States as the company's filed for bankruptcy. Other familiar names on the creditors list include One Industries, Danny LaPorte, KBC and J-Law Racing. Don't despair if you're a big fan of the No Fear brand though because No Fear

Europe – which is a completely separate company - is alive and well and will be continuing to trade as normal.

In team news it appears that Nev Bradshaw's

tartin' Stateside if I may I'd like to first of all now a free agent after parting ways with MVR-D. Basically a few things changed for both myself and the guys at Motovision and the outcome is that it would have started to cost me money to go racing, says Nev. "I couldn't afford to do that so I've gone out and got a part-time job and I'll be starting up the two7two race academy in the summer. Everybody's been awesome and I'm still gonna race as a privateer this year in the MX1 class - hopefully I can do well.

> We briefly mentioned last month that there was an amount of kerfuffle surrounding the annual beach blast at Weston-super-Mare. At the moment it looks like Events22 will be hosting an event called the Events22 Weston Beach Enduro at the resort on October 7-9 which is something we can all look forward to. Check out the event's official website at www.e22westonbeachenduro.com for more details. There's no official word yet from Gareth Hockey on his four-round beach race series that he plans to launch this autumn but we'll keep you up to speed with that and any news just as soon as we get it.

As well as popping some smoking hot lingerie models on our TV screens each Christmas and making awesome butties, motocross fans in the North West have got plenty to thank Marks and Spencers for as soil extracted from the site of their new store in Ellesmere Port will be used to create a motocross park that's already been approved by the Cheshire West and Chester Council.

The BASE project will not only create another legal place to ride for existing enthusiasts but could help bring newcomers into the sport with their in-school reward scheme and school engagement programme. It's hoped the new park will open sometime in the spring.

A few dates for your diaries now... March 13 is all about WOR's The Tough One at Back Cowm Quarry near Rochdale. Graham Jarvis, Wayne Braybrook and Kiwi Chris Birch head the pro entry at this most extreme of enduro events that has a whole new setting for 2011 and will offer a much more punishing ride than ever before. The race action kicks off at 9am for the Vets and Clubmen, the Gas Gas Speed Trial starts at 11:30am with the three-hour Main Event leaving the line at 1.30pm. Admission to this event costs a recession-busting £15 for adults, £10 for 7-14 year olds and f-all for anyone born after 2004. Bargain! If you're not sure where Back Cowm is chuck OL12 8LX into your satnav on March 13 and go on a magical mystery tour – you won't be disappointed.

One week later and the big event bleeping away on the off-road radar is the Hawkstone International which unfortunately clashes with the second

weekend of British Sprint Enduro Championship action at Llangrove in Monmouth. After a slow start signin' 'em up the Hawkstone crew have really managed to attract some top names to this most pesky of pre-GP season shootouts including internationals Steve Ramon, Clement Desalle, Ken De Dycker, Tanel Leok and Seb Pourcel who'll be hoping to beat off the homeboys – Swordy, TC, Ando, Woody, Smith and Irwin – in the MX1 division

Ando, Woody, Smith and Irwin – in the MX1 division. In MX2 it really is a battle of the Brits as every top-level, 250F-ridin' UK passport holder (bar Canadian Dean Wilson \*wink\*) is signed up to do battle in the strenuous Salop sands. So we're talking Tommy Searle, Max Anstie, Jake Nicholls, EBB, Scott Elderfield and Steven Clarke who'll have their hands full with foreign invaders Valentin Teillet, Marcus Schiffer, Arnaud Tonus, Alexander Tonkov, Sean Mitchell and MVR-D's Mattis Karro.

Hawkstone's situated slap bang between the A49 and A53 around 10 miles north of Shrewsbury. Admission for the international costs £20 for grown-ups with under-14s getting a free day out. We'll see you there then, eh?

We'll see you there then, eh?
After a slightly dodgy edition at Battersea Power
Station in 2010 the Red Bull X-Fighters won't be
returning to the UK in 2011 but don't worry about it









because something bigger and badder is headed to these shores on **July 2** and Cardiff's Millennium Stadium in particular.

With a rider roster that's gonna blow your mind the Monster Energy Extreme Freestylers Tour is set to go off big with fun-lovin' FMXers Nate Adams, Robbie Maddison, Adam Jones, Brian Deegan, Mike Mason, Libor Podmol, Brody Wilson, Seth Enslow and more all ready to throw down their best shizzle in a choreographed live show that you won't forget in a hurry. If you want to buy some tickets I really suggest you keep an eye on www.extremefreestylers.com because although the Millennium Stadium is a big old unit – just like yo mamma – this sucker's gonna sell out fast!

And speaking of selling out I was more than disappointed to see that the GOAT is now endorsing the Sbyke – www.sbyke.com – which is a half-BMX half-skateboard type contraption that you really wouldn't wanna be seen dead on. I hate to bag on Ricky because his level of determination and application make him a hero to millions of motocross fans but the Sbyke, really? What next, Jeremy McGrath endorsing a pogo-stick?



is still right on it n'all despite being old enough to be SX rookie Ken Roczen's dad – crazy huh? Anyway, as a great guy, awesome ambassador and superior spokesman, the bigwigs at MSR in the States and Off Road Action here in the UK - who import the full range of MSR goodies - are pleased as punch to have K-Dub representing them once more in 2011.

You might have noticed that Kevin's been rockin' some new duds in the more recent AMA races and that's because MSR have just launched their all-new and very awesome '12 Spring Line.

To celebrate the launchet they've agreed to team up with us here at DBR and offer all of our lovely readers the chance to win a genuine set of Kevin's raced-in racewear.

Is it: A: Main Supply Route

B: Musty Socks Reek

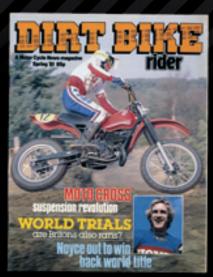
C: Malcolm Smith Racing

D: Minimum Security Requirements

When you've figured out the answer - for a clue check out www.msrmx.com/company - log on to www.dirtbikerider.com or use your smartphone to scan the QR code that'll take you swiftly to our home page, then follow the competition link, fill in the fields and hit transmit. The competition closes on April 7 and the sender of the first correct answer drawn at random will win Windham's wacewear (provided The Bear hasn't guzzled it all in the meantime). Wicked.



TRAWL THROUGH THE



Spring 1981:
This is it – number one, numero uno, where it all began! The first ever issue of DBR has Paul Hunt gracing the cover aboard a Swing-Link Yamaha as part of our 'suspension revolution' special. And while we're getting all technical, MX's most famous moustache – along with owner Roger Harvey - tests five of the new breed of water-cooled 125cc motocross machines. Elsewhere features on 'Belgian bombshells' Andre Malherbe, Georges Jobe and Harry Everts plus an interview with Bob Hannah help to make DBR #1 a stonking debut!



# June 1990:

A full 11 years before he finally realised his potential and won a world title, Jamie Dobb's our cover star as we celebrate 1990's awesome 250cc world championship chase. A youthful Jack Burnicle also catches up with the even more youthful Mark Eastwood and Paul Malin as the 'young lions' slug it out in their debut season of 500GPs and Rage reports on the ban on full-face helmets in youth MX.

To trawl through more back issues hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com or run your smartphone over the QR code on the opposite page and click on the digital vault button - new issues are constantly being added so keep checking back...





BIKE'S PREPPED, THE BODY'S RIPPED AND JAKE'S COUNTING DOWN THE DAYS UNTIL THE SEASON KICKS OFF...

everyone - how's it going? It's been another busy happening month for myself along with everyone else involved in the sport. Everything's really starting to kick off now which is cool and there's a fair bit of excitement about the upcoming series plus the current SX championship in America. Will Roczen be able to sustain throughout the year? I think it's going to be really tough for him to do so against a well-rested and prepared GP field. But he's always good for a surprise and I'm glad he's coming back to do the series after small talk of him wanting to stay in CA blah blah blah. In one respect who can blame the kid, how many of us at 16 had chicks with silicone bits chasing after us? Ha ha ha!

I'm excited about it all and enjoying my riding a lot on the new bike. I've clocked a good number of hours up on it now and also got a few in in some sloppy conditions since I've been back. Since I last wrote I competed in a cool race I mentioned last time called the Golden Nuggets in New Zealand - the weird name is because the track's on the edge of an old river bed where they've found a lot of gold so each podium trophy has a few flakes of gold in it which is pretty cool. I brought the winner's trophy back to sunny Suffolk which was nice.

We raced three 15-minute motos on both Saturday and Sunday. It was a cool event, really family-orientated and a rough track. A little like Brampton but a bit firmer. It was also cool to see the M2 division mixed with 250Fs and 250 two-strokes like they do in amateur racing in America. It's such a good idea and I wish it would take off over here because I love 250 smokers and because it allows privateers to still be competitive as it's cheaper for them to have fast bikes which they can do most of the work on themselves. Hope this happens one day...

From the race onwards JC and I really worked really hard on sharpening every part of our riding up and thanks to Mike Church again for pit-boarding us the whole time. Poor ol' Mike was juggling between two phones trying to time us both and pit-board too - he did a good job though. Tom would be proud! I was sad to leave NZ and the Coppins/Church family behind, they've been so good to me and I felt at home 24/7. I was sad to see the back of my bike too after looking after it so well and it being so good to me. Big thanks to KTM for helping me with the bike.

I flew back in normal seats which wasn't too smokey after being spoilt in first class on the way out especially when within a minute of sitting down I could smell some old munter's feet who must have been on some nature trek! I wasn't happy at the time but 30 hours or so later I was greeted by Blu at the airport and soon after that by my Jack Russell, Percy, in the car. I was happy but spaced right out by the flight so I went

out for a nice big roast the next day and rested up before testing the following day at my track. It was a bit too close for my liking but WP had been booked and I wasn't up for missing out on getting set up.

It was nice to see Wayne and Jeremy again after a few cold months, they have been working ridiculously hard as usual to keep the wheels rolling and building us bikes. First day of the test was good - I was still spaced out as I hadn't slept that well but man was it nice to ride my track. I hadn't ridden the MX track since the day I broke my leg (which is pretty good nowadays actually - a bit stiff when cold but not too bad) on November 4 and it hasn't been graded since it got built in April. It roughed up good with myself and team-mates Irwin and Booker thrashing around.

The second day was much better - I felt at home and the bike felt really good. The track was getting very rough and I felt fast. I did a lot of riding then did my first bit of boxing in a while that night which was fun - it took some getting into though. First few rounds I was a bit loose and got a few smacks which I wasn't too pumped on but then I woke up and started giving them back which felt good. Meanwhile, the Holeshot King was giving the mechanics and riders a boxing lesson and had them doing a bit with each other. They seemed to enjoy it and I got a serious sweat on after about 20 minutes of not leaving the ring.

Next day we left the house at 6am for FatCats near Doncaster - what a place that is! I'd read about it but didn't realise what a cool all-weather set-up they've got there. I was so tired and it rained all day so I sat in the van and said 'I will ride tomorrow, I need my rest'. Next day I rode every session possible and had a awesome day's riding in the Lommel-like sand up there Highly recommend that track to anyone.

I came home and Wayne and I tested a few more bits the next day and David Knight came up to try his bike before the Muntjac Enduro that Sunday. It was cool to have him up - he's a top bloke. I had the weekend completely off after a hectic week. My mates and I drove up and watched Knighter and the rest of the enduro boys ride on Sunday which was nice for a change and I wish I could have done it to be honest if I had the energy.

I'm sat here in our conservatory typing this at 10pm after two solid days riding and a long 360-mile round trip to north Lincolnshire to ride today at a cool track called Salters Lane. So it's a shower then bed for me, a nice rest tomorrow then just the finishing touches for the weekend and the first

round of the Maxxis championship. I'm up for it and I know I've worked so hard for it and I can't wait to get the racing under way...

Go Hard #45



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# BLOOD IWERT GERRIN

elcome, race fans, to your monthly Blood, Sweat and Gears column. As you read this a new race season will be blasting off. Those of you who have put in the winter training will already be reaping the early rewards. As you know, we've been busy all winter filming events around the country. But we still have a few more weeks before we're back on TV. Don't worry though — we'll keep you posted as soon as our new launch date is confirmed.

Some of the events we've been filming have proven to be real crackers. David Knight recently scored a fine win at Paul Edmondson's Extreme Enduro. These guys are totally nuts, constantly pushing themselves and their machines to the absolute limit. We also stopped off in London for a trip to the O2 Arena for the British SX championships. I don't know if it's because I'm getting old but I must say I could get used to this indoor racing – the conditions are far more pleasant and it made a nice change not to get thoroughly soaked for once!

I'm so pleased that the momentum from the opening round in Belfast managed to continue throughout the tournament. The London leg was a hotly contested event and it really is great to see the top British riders are taking this seriously. The fans that packed out the O2 were all treated to some top-quality, bar-banging races.

We also filmed the final round in Liverpool where a delighted Tom Church and Dave Thorpe celebrated a fantastic SX1 title win. Congratulations also to each of the class winners who will no doubt be mentioned elsewhere in the magazine. The future is looking bright for supercross in Britain.

When we do return to the air we'll be introducing a couple of new features in our continuing quest to make sure Blood Sweat and Gears remains essential viewing for fans of exciting off-road action. One of the things we'll be doing is following a young rider as he makes his move from the youth ranks into the pros. That rider is Ryan Williams who finished third in the Masters MXY2 class last year. He's already had two podiums this year at London and Liverpool and our cameras will track his progress throughout the remainder of the season.

We must just say a big thank you to the guys at Freestyle Extreme and FRO Systems who have agreed to help Ryan on his journey. We really do appreciate everything you guys are doing to help him on his way. I've also got to thank the team at Suzuki who have kindly donated a test bike. We'll be putting this bike into all different kinds of meetings from enduro to club motocross and even a few veteran races, all ridden by an average rider to give you a realistic idea of the bike's capabilities.

We can't wait to get back on your screens although I'm trying to make the most of these last few weeks of (relative) calm – once we start up properly we'll be working flat-out until late October. Hearing all the great feedback at events and on our Facebook page makes it all worthwhile and you know we wouldn't have it any other way!

Until next month, ride safe.

**BLOOD SWEAT & GEARS** will be back on the Extreme Sports Channel (Sky 419/Virgin 527) soon. Check listings for details.



# **CROCKSTAR**

# **EL KNACKERED!**

IT'S BEEN A BUSY – AND DISAPPOINTING – FEW WEEKS FOR EL GORDO WHO'S BEEN RUNNING HIS TRAINING CAMPS, DIALLING IN HIS NEW BIKE AND FAILING TO GET A RIDE AT THE SCENE OF HIS FIRST GP WIN...

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Sutty

'm writing this from my hotel room in Spain during the last few days of my final camp. It's night time and I'm exhausted from my work but DBR deadlines wait for no man and I gotta get down to business and type my tripe.

The riding has been awesome out here and I love my Suzuki. The track choice is vast and I have had many different types of terrain to challenge the new bike and get a good feel for the overall package. During the period of being here in Spain I have returned to the UK for two supercross events and also for a day's testing with the Relentless Suzuki by TAS team mechanic Paul Conway. The race bike the team has produced is excellent so far. We will continue to make improvements once I am home from my work in Spain.

When this issue of DBR hits the shops I will have returned home and be based back in the UK. Testing and development will begin for both rider and machine as race schedules and weather allows us to do so. I'm excited to get progress made from where I finished off in 2010. I think talk's cheap and I could continue to feed you with very convincing pre-race hype to fill the lines of this column but I'll do everyone a favour and save you from trawling through such a pointless exercise. I know what I've got, I know what I'm going to give — let's see where it gets me.

The London SX doesn't please me when I reflect on it. I had sufficient pace and strength although couldn't make a decent result. I was disappointed as it was my yellow debut. Liverpool was a bit better and I ended up on the podium with a third in the SX1 final.

This weekend coming is the opening race of the Maxxis British championship. I fly from Spain to the UK on Saturday and will be ready to tackle the track at Little Silver fresh on Sunday morning. I have memories from the same event in 2010 popping into my mind as I type this. If it goes as last year did then I'll be satisfied enough. Too much focus is put on the series opener and everyone is so jacked up about it.

Let's see how it goes, eh?

For some odd logic I seem to be following as I type this, I feel against discussing what I have been doing recently. Almost as if I'm trying to keep my cards close to my chest and be a stealth challenger. Then when you are all least expecting it I'll pull out my trump card – pow!

I discovered last week that round one of the Spanish MX Elite championship was at Talavera de la Reina. I entered the event as a wildcard, got my start permission and insurance from the MCUI, bought tyres, made numbers, borrowed tear-offs, bought an airbed and sleeping bags, drove the seven hours there from my camp, slept in the freezing cold van for a few cold hours and then woke up on Sunday morning to learn that they would only allow me to race if I'd been there on the Saturday to put the bike through Technical Control.

Talavera is where I won my first GP and it was always the opening GP of each season for a number of years. I was the last winner of a GP there. I have a certain connection to the place and was very, very excited to be returning there to race the track that brought me so much pleasure. Being told I couldn't race due to a formal rule was a kick in the stones after I had gone to so much effort to try to make it happen. I had hoped they would make an exception. Perhaps next year I'll get my way. Jonathan Barragan won both motos by the way.

I met an old friend of mine while I was there – Kari Tiainen. He is now running a WRC team for his famous Formula One buddy Kimi Raikkonen. ICE 1 Racing Team it's called and OMG have they got gazillions of dollars to spend or what. Kari is a multi world enduro champion and I think he will do a superb job of running the team.

Good luck to them.

Righto, it's bed time. My eyes are now stinging and my jaw's sore from yawning. Hopefully yours aren't too after reading this. Adios! El Gordo...



IT'S A TOUGH OLD SLOG AT THE OPENING ROUND OF THE BEC IN THETFORD'S WICKED WOODLAND...

Words and photo by Sutty

avid Knight kickstarts his defence of the British Enduro Championship in the best way possible by dominating the opening round of the 2011 series - the Muntjac. Traditionally one of the toughest events of the year - both physically and mentally – Knighter's the only Championship class rider to stay penalty-free on the going and sets the fastest time on all five tests as well to win by a massive margin.

"I'm really pleased with the way the event went," says DK. "It's always a tough one-day race and I normally find it hard because you can't attack the special tests properly because they're relatively short and mistakes are hard to recover from but I

really felt relaxed this year. The first test was slippery but I put in a good time that meant I had a decent lead straight away. After that I just made sure I didn't make any mistakes and towards the end of

the event I got a couple more good tests in."

Second overall and leading E2 pilot is Husaberg's four-popper pilot Alex Rockwell. A training partner of DK's on the Isle of Man, the former youth motocross champ is one of three riders to lose a minute on the going but is second fastest overall through the tests to claim the runner-up position. Rocky's so quick on the tests he misses winning the fourth outright by less than half-a-second – could that be the closest anyone gets to Knighter in the BEC all year?

After missing his minute by mere seconds at one of the check points E1/four-stroke winner Paul Edmondson must have been kicking himself because if it weren't for that small time-keeping error the three-time world champion would have finished a safe second overall on the day. Instead Fast Eddy has to be content with third overall and a class win.

Back on KTM machinery again after several years away, former GP motocross pilot Carl Nunn acquits himself well in the world of timecard enduros. The two-time British MX champ finishes fifth overall in the E2 category – and 15th overall – after losing a whopping five minutes on the going.

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WITH THE SX SEASON DONE AND DUSTED, STEVE TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO THE REAL JOB IN HAND – WINNING THE MAXXIS MX1 BRITISH TITLE...

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Sutty

he month started with the Future West supercross - it was the first one I'd done for a few years and I was really looking forward to the racing. The O2 Arena is impressive - it's so big with every restaurant you could imagine and lots of shopping opportunities to keep that special lady in your life happy.

I went down on the Friday morning as we were all hoping to have a go on the track before the Saturday. However, it was still being built so we only managed to ride a small part of it. I drove home that night as it's not too far for me. In the morning when I arrived the track was complete and looked good. But the evening did not go as planned and in the finals I had a crash when Shaun Simpson landed on me. I wasn't able to ride properly after that as I'd bruised my ribs. So I went away from the night disappointed. It was a shame but what a great turn-out of fans - it's good to see the amount of support we get as riders.

The next supercross was at Liverpool Arena. Once again the place was cool and I stayed up on the Thursday and Friday nights. On the Friday we managed to get a few practices in on the track. I felt strong from the start and with each heat race on the Saturday I could feel my riding improving and becoming faster. I was determined to make this a good night and once again was really looking forward to racing.

I led the British final from start to finish so that was a great confidence boost, especially as I hadn't been practising on any SX tracks beforehand. It was a great night for the team as Tom won the championship. In the Pro SX1 I came second as I messed up on a jump. Overall I was really pleased and glad that the team had us both on the podium that night.

I recently went to a charity ball where they were raising money for a children's hospice. We raised a lot of money with a sponsored cycle and that night even more was raised with a raffle and auction. It's so hard to understand what the couple who organised the fund-raiser must have gone through after losing their son. And to then

want to help other people in their situation... I must say it was an amazing night and I feel very lucky to be able to help and be a part of raising money for such a great cause. It really makes you realise how lucky you are.

The family are doing well. Ayrton is looking forward to coming this season as he's obsessed with bikes. He's grown up so fast and for me it's great as we're more like buddies - he thinks I'm super-cool so I'm making the most of that! And the pregnancy is going well - I saw the scan and it's mega so racing and family life are good. I just need lots of wins this year and it will be perfect.

I was invited to the rugby last week by Bath and England international Matt Banahan. He's a keen motocross fan and was at a couple of the British rounds last year watching. I got to know him through TC. As Matt lives around the Marshfield area he's pretty good mates with the MX boys up there. TC picked me up en-route to Twickenham and we arrived early to grab some food and soak up the atmosphere. We hooked up with Matt's brother Paul who was sinking a few pre-match beers. It was cool having Paul around as he was giving us a match run down on the French team and the rest of the time telling us how good Johnny Wilkinson really is.

The game was awesome, it was my first time at a rugby match and what a game to watch live. I could not believe how big and tall those guys are - I would rather case a triple than have one of them put me down! We stayed around after the match and had tea and sandwiches in the player's lounge. Matt popped in for a chat which was cool and then once the traffic died down TC and I headed home. Awesome day!

Well the British is now about to start and I cannot wait. I've felt strong on my bike over the last month and I'm 100 per cent confident I can win. Little Silver is the first on the calendar so

Braaaaap #2

bring it on!



# NAT'SBACK!

SHE'S BEEN OFF A BIKE FOR FIVE MONTHS WHILE SHE HEALS UP AND NOW REIGNING BRITISH LADIES' CHAMP NATALIE KANE'S GETTING READY FOR HER RACING RETURN...

Interview by  $Jenni\ Dick\ Photos\ by\ Sutty$ 

**DBR:** What's been happening since the end of last season?

NK: "After the last British women's race my doctor told me to rest the wrist injury I'd had most of the season and see how we went on. It wasn't getting better doing normal stuff like picking up my little sister and doing basic things at home so I went to see a specialist. They said I needed an operation and on December 14 I had surgery to repair the ligament in my wrist I'd torn off the bone which I'd originally broken in a practice crash last year.

"Also there were some other issues in there that hadn't shown up in the scans which the doctor, who was based in London, fixed for me. I then had physio after Christmas and that's pretty much been it – it's now the last week of February and I'm nearly done with physio and ready to ride."

**DBR:** So with a big break on your hands what did you get up to?

NK: "I got a big break – it's like five months since I rode – and I've not been up to much, just spending a lot of time with the family which has been good, especially as I'm moving away this year. I also got chance to catch up with friends and do stuff I haven't been able to do in a while since I'm away so much. Then I started training but to be honest I couldn't really do much upper body stuff because of the wrist."

DBR: What training have you been doing? NK: "I've concentrated on core training, cardio and legs but then I've also been backwards and forwards from Ireland to the physio who is in London so it was pretty hectic! Now I'm back home I've got a physio sorted and then I have a programme together to get going with."

**DBR:** We were going to ask you about your new bike and pre-season testing but I guess you don't know so much at the minute?

**NK:** "This year's bike is totally different from 2010 but I haven't ridden it yet. It's a fuel injection bike which is going to make the whole bike feel different when the throttle hits in and stuff. The power delivery is going to be different so it's going to take a bit of time to get used to. Also the KTM has changed quite a lot with the linkage system they now have and the frame is different.

"So basically it's a whole new bike and I've sat on one while they've been in the workshop but that's about all. To be honest I think it will suit me better because they are skinnier – last year's KTM was a lot different from the Suzuki I'd ridden before but the new bike should be a lot better for me and I really can't wait to get on and ride one now."

**DBR:** Going forward from now what's the plan as the season isn't far off?

NK: "My season starts on March 12 and then the next day I'm doing the Dutch championship race. Really, once I get on the bike I'll be concentrating on getting as much ride time as possible because that's where I'm going to be lacking the most. So it will be three to four times a week riding and working really hard with Andy my mechanic to get the bike set up as quick as possible.

"One of the major things that's changing this year is that I'll be moving to Holland as the cost of travel backwards and forwards to Ireland is expensive and we have to cut back. I'm lucky Roger [Magee] is continuing to support with the world championship – especially with how it's all over the place this year – and we agreed this would be the best way. There

are benefits to being in Holland as there are a lot more tracks there and it's much more central to the races as I'll also be competing in the Dutch and German women's championship this year.

"I'll be based near Lommel about half-an-hour from where the boys in the team are. We'll definitely be meeting up and also working with Harry Everts who is keen to help all the KTM riders. The tracks are also much cheaper than England and more accessible so it should help being there."

**DBR:** With the world championship starting in April what's your aim for this year?

NK: "Well we'll have to see how I'm getting on by then but the aim is definitely for top three in the championship this year and trying to win a few rounds. I should actually still be off the bike for another month but the doctor understands the sport so he's said I can ride soon if I'm careful. I can't undo the work he's done, it's just a bit stiff at the moment. So I just need to get up to speed as quick as possible and be safe during the start of the season."

DBR: Have you thought about going to race in America and are there any plans to try out the AMA series?

**NK:** "Roger's plan for me is to do all these races in Europe so there's not much time for America but definitely if I don't get hurt all being well – and Roger agrees – I plan to go to America to have a few races there."

**DBR:** What is a typical Natalie Kane week during the season?

NK: "In a normal week in the season I'd have a Monday off to get everything washed and sorted out from the weekend before. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday I'd be riding and training then I'd get Friday off. This year I'm mainly going for the riding and on Friday get ready for the races.

"Facebook is definitely going to get used up a lot this year too though with being away from home. My mum rings me for a good two hours all the time so I'm going to have to change a few things – get a Dutch phone or something to keep in contact with home. I am looking forward to getting going with it all though."

**DBR:** Who's your money on in the MX1 world championship?

NK: "Desalle is going to be quite good, Cairoli is always going to be up there but I think there may be some surprises in there too with riders like Shaun Simpson – especially towards the end of the year I think he can come good."

**DBR:** And in the MX2 world championship? **NK:** "Definitely Ken Roczen and I think Jake will go well this year too."

**DBR:** Who are going to be your biggest rivals in the women's world championship?

NK: "I'd say definitely Lancelot and Laier. Lancelot is going to be good as she's back on a Kawasaki and she's just much more comfortable on that bike. Laier has so much confidence from winning last year and from what I've heard she hasn't had a break and she's going real good too. But then when I get back to full fitness and riding the way I know I can ride I think I can be up there. I'm not saying I'm going to win but I don't think they will be a million miles away. Last year wasn't a good year for me with the injury and we still finished sixth but this year I have to put everything into it — as you can see the rides are quite hard to get."

DBR: Are there any new British ladies in the sport you think could go well in the UK?

NK: "Alix Dunlop was out last year with a knee injury but when I've been staying with her she's been going good. Her wee sister has just moved up and she has a good style, her speed isn't quite there yet but if it comes she could be quite good too. I meant to add also that Lancelot has a team-mate as well. I don't know who she is – no-one does – but she could be a surprise."

**DBR:** What do you think to the women's championship no longer running with the GPs? **NK:** "To be honest I can't understand why the

women have been replaced by the veterans. No disrespect to the vets out there but some of the women's races last year were the best. Out of the first five or six women anyone could win the race. Even if someone got the holeshot and got away the battle for second was still really good.

"When I've been at a race people just don't watch the veterans so much so I don't understand it and I don't understand why they've moved the women with the youth in Britain either. I definitely don't think we'll have half the women that were there last year in the world championship. When there was MX1 and MX2 it was easy for a team to bring an extra bike in the truck. I don't even know if people like Papenmeier will be there this year with the lack of funding. I'm just lucky I have Roger and I was actually quite surprised when they continued to support me in the world series. KTM have been really behind me to continue which is great too."

DBR: You raced a couple of the main British championship races last year with the men - any plans to do the same this year?

NK: "With all these other races we have planned I think I can fit in two of the main British championship races but it won't be the Desertmartin round which is a bit of a shame as it would be great to have a proper home race!"

DBR: Tell us about your team-mates..

NK: "Obviously since I've been injured I haven't seen them much but last year I spent a fair bit of time with Jake. He's really nice and if I was struggling he'd come and tell me his lines or to watch this part or that part and he's always been helpful. And Graeme as well at the races he was at he used to watch and say where I was quicker or could improve which was really nice.

"I haven't seen Graeme ride the 350 vet but I've been speaking to him and he feels quite comfortable on it - he's been testing in Spain where I should have been. I hope he gets a full season in this year and gets going well on it, I think he's definitely going to be doing good in the British although it's going to take some time to get there in the worlds as it's a big step up for him.

DBR: And finally, do you get a chance to do girly stuff like shopping etc?

NK: "To be honest my shopping usually involves checking out the Fox Racing website! But obviously during the time off I've caught up on a bit of shopping. Injury sucks but it does mean you get a chance to be with the family. Looks like from now I'll just be checking out the Fox site for new stuff!'





# **AX POWER**

# FRENCH FANCY!

MAX HAS BEEN HANGING OUT IN MARSEILLE BUT DIDN'T GET TO HANG IT OUT AT VALENCE. STILL, ONCE THE SEASON GETS GOING HE'LL GET PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES...

Words by Max Anstie Photo by Nuno Laranjeira

etting back into the sand was really fun after all the testing and motos my bike is feeling great and I'm ready to race. I had loads of fun in Belgium and even spent a few days at the RC car track just down the road from where I'm staying.

Lionel (my friend I'm staying with here) has also got a little team and we went to a local race. It was just like going to a Portsmouth club race and bought back loads of memories of when I was on a 50cc. It was really cool to go. The next day we were out at Lommel and Jeffrey showed up to have a play. We ended up putting a really good show on for all the spectators watching and started rubbing some plastic for five laps.

Then it was time to head down to Valence in the South of France. Unfortunately, it wasn't on the agenda for me to race so I had to watch but it was nice for me to see some of my Euro buddies. I did loads of interviews while I was there and helped a few kids out with some lines. So Valence was okay but it would have been better if I could have ridden!

The day after Valence I headed to the CLS Kawasaki photoshoot which was sweet! I did massive whips and scrubs so they got loads of cool pictures and then I had to slip on a Ben Townley jersey and hop on the big 450 to do some wheelies. Ben broke his jaw not too long ago so I had to do his poster picture! Ha ha ha - hope he likes it. After the pictures were all done we headed back to Marseille where we cleaned everything up and I went to bed.

I've been working really hard to stay on my programme while down here in Marseille but it's difficult because I'm rooming with the mechanics who are working until 1am on the bikes so they are up late and I've been finding it difficult to sleep. They eat pizza for breakfast as well! I'm trying hard though - I ride and I race because I want to win! That's it. I wake up at 5am so I can

work to be better every day.

Changing the subject now... I'm actually on my very last school book! When I finish this one I am completely done. In June when I get my cap and gown like in the movies I will put a pic in for my column!

The other day JJ, the owner of team CLS Kawasaki, actually got us VIP tickets to the Manchester United vs Marseille football match. It was an amazing atmosphere in the stadium but the score was 0-0 so that was the only rubbish thing.

For the last few days before heading down to our first international at Lacappelle I got a hotel room so I could do my own thing a bit more. To be honest after all the advice I got in the week leading up to it I felt like I was riding slower than normal but you know everything can't be perfect and the international races are just a good warm-up.

So I didn't feel best prepared and I proved to myself that my preparation does make a huge difference. Being organised and in control frees your mind and without my preparation I ended up on the floor again. I'm learning - even if it is the hard way. This week coming up I am getting my body ready to ride again and doing my homework for the next race in Sommieres.

Don't forget to message me on facebook.com/UNIONMAX or email me at devinmitchell@rocketmail.com if you want to join in on our Anstie Training School happening on April 16 in England near Andover. It's going to be a great day of working on all skills that you can then take home with you and work on yourself to improve your riding every time you go out. See you there!

Cheers and I'll talk to you next month...



# MARVINGUSQUIN THE FRENCH TWO-TIME WORLD CHAMP SPILLEZ LES BEANS ON

MOTOCROSS. SUPERCROSS AND LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM...

Q: Will your knee be better in time to allow you to ride in the Supercross Lites East division?

iam Stoodley, Andover

A: "No, it's not in our plan with the team Red Bull KTM - we prefer to focus on the outdoors nationals.

Q: Will the bike that you ride in the US be identical to your European model and if not what are the big differences?

### Simon Dewhurst, Mere

A: "The bike is not and is different to the one that I rode in Europe. Different because I ride in America with the new injection bike and in supercross with different suspension. I am happy to work with RG3 and before my injury we worked a lot on the KTM test track."

Q: How much of a disappointment was last year's MXdN for you - was it bike problems or were you carrying an injury?

# Robert Williams, Looe

A: "I was very disappointed for the French team firstly. I was very excited to be in America for the MXoN but for me and the Red Bull KTM team it was not a good weekend also. It was the second time for us to ride with the injection bike and we had some problems.'

Q: How difficult was it back in 2009 when you managed to win the championship after the legal battles with the NGS Honda team?

Tracey Freeman, Hunstanton

A: "I was so excited to be on the Red Bull KTM bike that I had just one thing in my head - ride and win."

Q: How different is life in the US compared to France? aul Turpin, Godalming

A: "I like the life in America. The weather is almost perfect every day, the motocross racing is more famous compared to France and for my sport it's the perfect country. I have nice house, a big pick-up and now I just miss my bike."

Q: Do you prefer to ride MX or SX?

A: "I ride in supercross since 2000 when I was in 65cc and I love supercross but I like motocross too.'

Q: You came from finishing 14th in '08 to winning both the '09 and 2010 championships. What did you change in your programme to achieve this?

### Andy Whitelock, Prescot

A: "At the end of '08 I started to work with Yannig Kervella and it was first time for me to work hard with my physical condition. At the same time it was good for my mental conditioning and he taught me some technical aspects of riding. It was a big step for me, more professional."

Q: Was your contract in America dependent on you retaining your MX2 title last year?

**Dave Poynter, Harrow** 

A: "No it wasn't."

Q: Have you and Ken Roczen been hanging out in California together?

# **Hugh Mason**, Fleet

A: "We never ride together because he arrived in America when I was in France for the supercross of Bercy. But otherwise, sometimes I spend my time on the KTM test track when I go back to my house after the gym and we speak together with him and Andrew Short

Q: There are plenty of super-fast kids in the Lites class who also have the added advantage of knowing the tracks - what is your realistic goal for the outdoors series?

# Andy Quinn, Tottenham

A: "I don't really know. There are a lot of fast riders in this championship - it will be very intense and fast - but with my injury hopefully I will have time to be ready for the AMA championship."

Q: Is Roger De Coster's management style different to that of Pit and Stefan?

# Gareth Cooper, Matlock

A: "Every person is different I think. Roger is very calm,

very focussed. It's also different because in Europe I was in France with my trainer and my mechanic and here in America I live close to the KTM test track and Roger is coming to the track almost all the time with all the crew and the stuff."

Q: In Europe it's almost expected that KTM will win yet it's not the case in the US. Do you feel there is extra pressure on you to deliver immediate results?

# Simon Allgood, Worthing

A: "The Red Bull KTM team doesn't make me feel the pressure. This is our first year for all of us. I have to learn and they have to learn because it's different compared to Europe. But the team is already good, the bike is also good."

Q: What will you miss most about the world championships?

# Jeremy Burdiss, Topsham

A: "Some French friends, my French fans and the Red Bull KTM crew. I'm happy to keep with me my trainer and my mechanic for the AMA championship and my family is going to come from time to time in America."

Q: Did KTM let you keep your championship winning bikes?

Andrew Campbell, Haverhill

"Yes and I am very proud! Thanks to KTM."

Q: Do you see yourself ever coming back to Europe and the GPs or if all goes well would you like to spend the rest of your career racing in the US?

# lathan Luff, Manchester

A: "I really can't know. I feel good in America but you know, I arrived here only three months ago.

# **NEXTMONTH**

Got a question for the elder statesman of AMA SX? Fire it to us at dbrproprobe@googlemail.com and







# What do you get if you give the MCF's Matt Bates and Twisted 7's Jeff Perrett a pinch of salt and a twist of pepper? A pair of well seasoned ex pros, that's what!

**DBR:** Who would play you in a film of your life? JP: "I think Woody Harrelson would play the part well. He was awesome in Kingpin and with all the stupid scenarios and mess I've gotten into down the years I could see him up there on the big screen as me. MB: "Sacha Baron Cohen - although I'd have to chop his legs down a bit, at least it'd make me laugh!

DBR: Would you be able to check your own valve clearances?

JP: "You're joking, right? I can only just barely make my way around a two-stroke! I know what's wrong with a bike but wouldn't know how to solve the problem. I've been lucky to have my brother be my mechanic for most of my riding. I struggle with working the toaster at times so forget it!"

MB: "Not a chance. I'm from the two-stroke era where the hardest job was putting a power valve back together!'

DBR: Do you own a pair of pyjamas and if so what style?

JP: "You do realise you're asking a man, right? Not a chance.'

MB: "I do, my wife's bought me a few pairs but I've never worn them - that'd be like going to bed with your clothes on!'

DBR: What was the highlight of your career?

JP: "Just living the dream and doing GPs as a privateer for five years as a family. Results wise I guess finishing fifth in the British championship in 1998. Then there's stuff like Spode riding full chat through the pits at the Spanish GP in 1999 wearing only my boxers rolled up like a thong and my boots. The look on Joel Smets' face was priceless.

MB: "Not many really although I did beat Stefan Everts fair and square at the Coupe de l'avenir when we were both 18, although I was on a KX500 and he was on a 125! It's funny because every time I see him he mentions it - that's a nice memory he has considering he won 10 world championships but all he can really remember was little oi' me spanking him in Belgium!"

**DBR:** What car do you drive?

JP: "A Golf CL that I bought off a shifty Romanian guy for 400 nicker! She's sweet as a nut. However, a new van is imminent."

MB: "It's a proper old man's Audi that does everything for you other make you a sandwich when you drive. Everyone takes the piss out of me in it but I spend so much time in my car that it's got to have a

DBR: And if money were no object?

JP: "A 1972 gold Vauxhall Viva with tan leather interior, a convertible Ford Mustang, plenty more bikes and toys and my Twisted 7 team would be much bigger as well!" MB: "Roll's Royce - although I'd look like Paul Daniels driving a boat!'

DBR: Did you ever blame a poor result on a non-existent mechanical issue?

JP: "No, never. It just ain't worth it. If you mess up and ride bad then man-up and admit it. I always do my best to speak the truth."

MB: "No, my mechanic was too hard for that and would have killed me. Plus, I had enough injuries that I didn't need any excuses for poor results.

DBR: If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

JP: "Personality wise, absolutely nothing. I'm content with who I am and what I believe in and stand for. Physically a new left knee would be nice about now!" MB: "Be more patient and tolerant. I only every see things my way and if it can't be done yesterday then it's not worth doing!

DBR: If you could meet any person – dead or alive – who would it be?

JP: "This list could go on and on – there's so many – with the obvious one being my dad who died in '87. Another one that stands out in my head right now is Keith Moon from The Who - that man was seriously rock n' roll!"

MB: "My dad, I know that sounds soft and in a way is a bit of a cheat answer but my dad was a great bloke and never got to meet my wife or kids...

DBR: If you were shipwrecked on an island what three things would you want with you?

JP: "This is tough because you can't have internet or anything electrical, right? So a solar powered iPod, a beautiful woman and another beautiful woman! Does that count? Would they do my head in? Probably but it sounds pretty ideal sat here!'

MB: "My wife and my two kids - that's all I need. Although my dog would get pretty hungry being home alone and I ain't sure if he could pay the bills!

DBR: What's the most embarrassing thing you've done

JP: "I've done plenty of stupid things but I've never been embarrassed by them. I'm not one of those who doesn't know what they are doing when they are hammered anyway, I remember everything. To be honest, I'm more dangerous when I'm sober and besides my most embarrassing moment isn't for this publication.

MB: "Stole a golf buggy from a security bloke after a party at a festival. Then with three people in the back hanging on managed to hit a pretty big hole in the road and one of the girls - she was from Red Bull - flew off into a bush and really hurt herself. When drunk it was great but the sobering thought of what I did was pretty embarrassing the next day!

R: What's your most prized material possession? JP: "I'm more about memories and moments in time but I'll say my first place trophy for a two-day national I won in schoolboys when dad was ill in hospital. My Youthstream/FIM journalist of the year award from 2008 means a lot to me too. I was going through the worse time of my life when I won that and I'm proud of how I handled myself."

MB: "My first little boy's scan - I'd kill anyone who

DBR: Be honest, how often do you Google yourself? JP: "I think I've done it twice. I've only seen one other Jeff Perrett. He's a big American college football player."

MB: "I did it once about a year ago but there's two much more famous people called Matt Bates - one's a footballer and the other one is a speedway rider. I just did it again and the feckers are still more popular than me!

**DBR:** Blonde or brunette?

JP: "I guess my track record suggests brunette but let's be honest can I afford to be that fussy? No! So hair is optional, a pulse is the only requirement... MB: "Blonde."

DBR: One thing about your riding style you'd like to improve?

JP: "Nothing really, I'm happy with the way I ride after 30 years at it and more than content with my career. I'm even happy with my spode technique but I'll never be as good as my mate Jon 'Paxo' Pitman - he's the Godfather! The best I've ever seen."

MB: "I'd like to have had longer legs so that poxy seat didn't keep hitting me up the backside - for all those short-arse riders out there, you know what I mean!"

R: What's your favourite film?

JP: "This is almost impossible to answer, again there are loads. I like comedies mostly so let's go with 'Caddyshack'. I reckon I recite lines from that almost every day with my mate Chip.'

MB: "Borat and any of the Bourne films - you can't beat Borat though, it's irony at its best!"

R: What's your most annoying habit?

JP: "I have this weird thing going on where I'll just smack myself in the head hard with the remote control while watching TV for no reason whatsoever!" MB: "My wife tells me I have quite a few but I reckon I'm almost perfect other than I'm pretty bad at phoning people back - I reckon that could be a pretty bad

DBR: What was the worst decision you made during

JP: "Racing! Nah, just kidding. I don't have regrets, you do what feels right at the time. I guess leaving the door open for Paxo when I passed him at Waggadon Farm and he took me out was a bad decision though. I'm mildly scarred both mentally and physically from that!" MB: "Selling UK Supercross to Clear Channel back in 2002. I've kicked myself quite a few times for doing that but try to always think about the positives that I got

**DBR:** Something about yourself that nobody else knows?

JP: "I can perform open heart surgery with a fish knife, I dated Megan Fox, I'm balding out of choice, I wrote the song that makes the whole world sing. I'm also a compulsive liar." MB: "That I was faster on a road race bike than I was on a motocross bike but chose the dirt (good move, eh?)...



# RM-Z450: 2010 AMA World Supercro RM-Z450: 2010 AMA Motocross Cha RM-Z250: 2010 British Masters MXY RM-Z250: MOTO Magazine 250 Choic To celebrate a great 12 months for the RM-Z250 and the RM-Z450 we are giving you even more reason to ride one.

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Way of Life!

# BLARNEY



Words by Stevie Mills Photo by Sutty

ell it's official – the 2011 motocross season will be well and truly started by the time you have your mitts on this latest Dirt Bike Rider extravaganza. Let's hope all those weeks pumping iron in the gym, running through the freezing cold wind and rain, clocking up mile after mile for your endurance training and all so you don't get your butt kicked on a

Saturday afternoon – pay off!

Just when you thought you were having it bad, take a moment to consider the misfortunes of the AJ Elite Bathroom Team having to tear themselves away from our adorable climate to tough it out training in California. Life's hard! Apart from riding most days in motocross paradise, the enthusiastic Paddys pretty much got to meet every rider on the AMA SX tour and there's even a rumour that a certain Jonny O'Brien blagged a ride on a factory rider's bike at one of the practice tracks.

Alas, rubbing shoulders with the stars is a world away for me but I got a bit of satisfaction from what Davy Gorman told me a few days after his return. "What a shock to the system to be back riding at home in the s\*\*t, then spending three hours washing your bike - we never needed to powerwash a bike in the entire two weeks in SoCal." Welcome home boys!

Donemana plays host to the traditional March Hare Motocross which is just about the toughest circuit in the country. A win at the season opener can be good for your confidence but as we have seen so many times it counts for very little come the Ulster championship opener on March 26 at Downpatrick.

Many will remember the disaster that was witnessed at Downpatrick last season - it was a clutch massacre with most Grade C riders resigned to spectator mode as our top riders

struggled with the horrendous conditions due to the rain. The word is that the track owners have invested a lot of time and money upgrading their venue, introducing rhythm sections in a bid to serve up a strong first event of the new season weather permitting this could be a fantastic start to the year.

Forget about the Yanks and their AMA SX series - it's all up for grabs on the Emerald Isle with new bikes, new teams and a whole lot of attitude about to be let loose on motocross tracks all over the island in 2011. I for one am busting to see McC re-enter the fray aboard an AJ Elite KTM 450. Big Phil has been pounding out the laps and is ready to take on all-comers although he keeps saying he is riding for fun.

Defending champion Robert Hamilton on his G&G Ross Yamaha is going to have to work hard this season if he's to retain his MX1 and MX2 crowns. Not taking anything away from Hammy, he won last season's titles by riding consistent and taking points while his main competition were sidelined with injury.

Multi Ulster and Irish champion Wayne Garrett has just returned from his Spanish training camp and is hot to trot aboard his TSR KTM. Wayne will ride under the Rock Star KTM awning in the British domestic series under the watchful eye of Darren Wilson. Wayne is determined to put his career back on track following an injury-plagued 2010 season, as is Watt/GOMX KTM runner Richard Bird who has moved his focus to the MX1 series aboard the 350 Katoom.

TM-mounted Stuart Edmonds will ride when his commitments in the UK allow but it will be down to the efforts of Team VMX KTM to uphold the honour of the Southern Centre. Team Owner

Graeme Vigors has recruited the talents of Ross Brown to partner Michael McMahon.

GC has combined running his successful Spanish training schools with preparations for another season in British MX1 and he managed to fit in the final two rounds of the British Supercross series in London and Liverpool where sadly he lost his British Open title to Tom Church.

Martin Barr was in action at the Valence international in France in preparation for a season of Maxxis and Red Bull Pro National action plus several GPs that Proppa.com KTM have pencilled in. Not sure just yet how many GPs they'll attend but fans can be sure to see Marty in action at the British GP at Matterley Basin in August.

The J&R motocross track is back in business and open every Saturday and Sunday weather permitting. All bikes will be checked for noise levels and Db Dawgs are required for all four-strokes.

As I write this we are five days away from round one of the Maxxis British MX series. I won't be there in person although I will be glued to my computer watching the lap by lap results and on the phone to my new Risk Racing Europe wing man Neil McKeown. The talented cameraman is going to attend most British races. looking after Risk Racing-supported athletes and capturing enough on-track footage to produce some fine race reports.

I'm betting Mr Lawless a pint of whatever he is drinking nowadays that we will have at least two top five results from the Irish Armada at the first British round with the possibility of a podium by either Graeme or Marty. And GC might just throw in a surprise ride n'all...

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# JONTY'S BOX



he last 10 days have been flat-out busy for me. Heading into Europe on two separate occasions to do a number of pre-season photoshoots and rider interviews, I've spent time catching up with and chatting to some of the biggest names in enduro sport. I'm talking about the likes of Knight, Blazusiak, Aubert, Renet, Mena, Salminen, Meo, Guillaume, Seistola

For this is an important time of year for everyone. Each getting ready in their own personal way, all are either testing or 'fair weather' riding or both. Some have refreshed motivation thanks to joining a new team, others relieved to be sticking with what they know. For some the start of the international season can't come soon enough.

Almost without exception – and completely unprompted by myself - just about all riders touched upon the subject of the Indoor Enduro World Championship, or the 60-minute world series as one rider jokingly referred to it. All were disappointed that the proposed five-round championship ended up cut to two rounds and even those that aren't overly enamoured by the indoor discipline were well aware that the premature end to the series wasn't a positive one for enduro sport in general.

What was interesting to hear was a large proportion of the riders saying the same things with many keen to understand exactly why the series flopped so spectacularly. With most wanting a decent indoor series, trying to work out experience - was too much like a long trials

how to fix things and what the best way forward might be regarding any future championships

It's clear that a few things need to change. Firstly, with current promoters RPM Racing rumoured to be handing back their responsibilities to the FIM a new promoter needs to be found – and fast. The FIM might take on that role themselves as they do with the Indoor Trials World Championship which would be fine. But with several riders questioning the thinking behind some of the 'rules' applied to this year's championship, confidence in the FIM's ability to move things forward and sort things out wasn't exactly overwhelming.

Just about all riders agreed that running the championship across the Christmas break didn't work. Most seemed to think that a more supercross-like schedule would be better with either three or four events taking place within a six-week period. Keeping things short, sharp and concise - and completed at least two weeks before the Christmas break - is what most see as one of the best ways forward.

Of the two events that did run it was generally considered that one was exactly what is needed and the other a good example of what's not wanted. The Genoa event was night and day better as far as most riders were concerned due to a faster, more flowing track around which riders could race. Barcelona by comparison and despite the organiser's considerable

section. Indoor enduro racing does need to include a multitude of different 'off-road' obstacles but without the racing element can become processional and uninteresting.

The length of races, the time between races and many other details need to be sorted out in order to deliver a better show but unless any and all future tracks offer enjoyable and exciting racing then there's little future for the sport. Having retired trials riders dominating the proceedings - which they certainly don't do in the EWC - shouldn't happen as it has done at some races. Equally, tracks that are little more than watered down supercross circuits aren't what's wanted either. Mixing the right amount of technical difficulty while also delivering tracks that can be raced around, just as a rider would with an outdoor special test, seems to be key to not only entertaining the spectators but also boosting rider numbers.

So where do things go from here? Has indoor enduro had its day in Europe? Will a stronger series be born from the mess that is the 2011 IEWC? Will the idea of an indoor championship simply get scrapped and replaced by a return to independently-promoted races?

Making things even more frustrating for many riders is the fact that the discipline that was born in Europe and which has hit a massive low-point is thriving in the States. In 2011 endurocross will be included in X Games for the first time ever while the regular endurocross series marches on successfully.



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# **TOO TALL**

Okay, I'll start with all the normal ass kissing stuff about how amazing your magazine is etc – I'm subscribed and it's a highlight of my month when I come in to find the mag on the doormat. So here's my point. You've done some tips on how to make a bike smaller but as I am 16 and 6ft 4in I could make use of some easy tips to make it bigger. Also I'm hoping to buy a new bike soon and could do with some advice on what one to get? I would like a 250F as new as possible but like many other teenagers I have little spare income. I would greatly appreciate some help with this... Alex, Colerne

If you're moving up to a 250F then you should find it plenty big enough for you Alex — unless you're strangely out of proportion and have got really long legs and a stumpy little body, a bit like Jeff Perrett only without his stumpy little legs. But if you really are out of proportion — or don't like to touch the ground with your feet — then you could always invest in a taller seat foam. Buying second-hand means you're much better off going for condition over make but used four-strokes can be a potential minefield so you need to have someone with you who knows what they're doing. Either than or go for a much simpler, safer 250 two-stroke.

# **MX JOURNO**

I'm an extremely keen reader of Dirt Bike Rider and I always buy the magazine. I'm in my first year of sixth form in my first year of A Levels and I think I might like to be a journalist like you guys. What is the best way to get into a job and a career path like yours?

Patrick, Watford

There's no simple way to get on the DBR career path Patrick – it just kinda happens. Sean partied away his A Level grades and accepted a job from his old man who was editor of TMX, then sorta worked his way up. SuttDawg – who was working as a car mechanic – just happened to be in the right place at the right time when DBR was hiring. Staff jobs as MX journos are rare as rocking horse winnets but get good grades in your A Levels, go to university and work hard and if an opportunity comes along you'll be in the best possible shape to grab it.

# **ASH IS BACK!**

Hey DBR, I thought I'd drop you a line and fire a warning shot across all my fellow two-stroke lovers' bows – Ash Harland is back! After dropping out of the British two-stroke champs in 2009 due to personal circumstances that lead through into 2010 I ended up riding a – shock horror – 450 four-stroke. Bit of a jump from the 125 but it was good experience.

But as with all four-strokes the buzz from winning a race on a four-stroke is nothing compared to crossing the line first on a 125 in an Open Expert category. So for this year after leaving the Moto Force-tuned 450 behind at the last winter series and buying a new bike I'm ready to go in 2011 and can't wait for the season to get under way...

For 2011 I'm armed with a new YZ125 with trick suspension courtesy of G Force/Moto Force suspension and tuning and clothing from Wulfsport. I'm feeling confident and can't wait to get the smell of two-stroke back into my system.

This year's schedule will consist of the MD Racing/UFO national two-stroke championship, the White Rose TDS two-stroke series and selected rounds of the Fuchs Silkolene two-stroke British championships with other club races to fill the gaps.

Ash, via email

Good to hear you're back on a stroker Ash – sounds like you're going to be raising hell up and down the country this season. Best of luck buddy and keep it pinned!

# WHERE IN WALES?

I'm 23 years old and looking to get into dirt bikes. I'm guessing that I would prefer to be out around mountains rather than on jumps but I don't know where to start. I live in Anglesey in North Wales and as far as I'm aware there aren't many places to go. Can you help me?

Craig, Anglesey

It was only a few months ago that the full DBR team – Sheriff Sean, Deputy Dawg and The Bear – were tearing it up around North Wales as guests of the awesome Ady Smith. If you're looking for a try before you buy off-road experience you won't do any better than Ady who can even provide machinery if needed. For more information on Ady's off-road schools call 01283 740147 or 07779 418336 or hook up to www.adysmith.co.uk and tell him that we sent you.

# **GO FOR IT!**

I have been riding my CRF450 for about six months now and I am loving every bit of the bike. I went from a 125 to a 450 and it was a big step but I'm glad I made it and I just wanted to say to any other riders out there who are thinking of making the same step to go for it – you will not regret it.

Mike, East Lothian

Horses for courses Mike. I'm not sure if you've heard the news up in Scotland yet but Ash Harland's gone the other way and switched back from a four-fiddy to a one-twenty-five. We sh\*t you not!



# LOVERPOOL!

All reet DBR! Love the mag etc etc etc and after spending a cracking evening in Liverpool I love Tom Church, Stephen Sword and CCM even more.

Who'd have ever believed that a CCM could win indoors? Growing up all I ever heard from my old man was Foamin' Bob this and Foamin' Bob that – now a CCM has won a supercross title the old bugger would turn in his grave. If he was actually dead. He's not but he damn near carked it with shock when I told him.

So well done Tom, Swordy, CCM and Future West for that matter for laying on a great night of racing.

Eric, Liverpool

You should go easy on your dad Eric if you want him to be around to see if Swordy or TC can win the British title outdoors as well – and they're both in with a very real shot...

# WHERE TO RIDE?

I work for the St George Youth Project based in Halifax and a number of the young people I work with are interested in off-road motorbiking but know of nowhere to go to be able to take part in their favourite pastime without breaking the law. I was hoping you could supply us with the names of some venues which would be accessible from Halifax.

lan, Halifax

You're a little bit stuck in the middle lan between three tracks we can personally vouch for – head west about 50 miles and there's **Preston Docks MX (07710 523430)**, head south east about the same distance and you've got **DMP at Finningley (01302 772092)** and a little further on **FatCats Motoparc (07990 514509)**. Good luck...



# GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? WELL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at <code>rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk</code>
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# HIT N'SWISS!

JUST TWO YEARS AGO ARNAUD TONUS WAS GETTING READY FOR HIS FIRST EVER GP - NOW HE'S GOT EQUAL BILLING ALONGSIDE THE REIGNING MAXXIS BRITISH MX2 CHAMP IN THE UK'S MOST SUCCESSFUL WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM...

Words and photos by Nuno Laranjeira

mong the psyched-up MX2 kids Arnaud Tonus often stands out by looking almost too calm on the startgate. Surrounded by hyper young pilots, mentally wiring themselves to race, he seems so relaxed. Under control. It's a serenity you would maybe expect to see in a more mature, experienced rider so it's all the more remarkable to discover that 2011 will be only the 19-year-old Swiss racer's third season in GPs.

But Arnaud comes from a family with a long association with high-pressure, top-flight sport. In a sense once he decided on his sport he was destined to race GPs, genetically suited to life as a professional motocross rider. It's in his guts. And it's also in his guts that he needs to work to succeed, that gain doesn't come without pain. It's a valuable lesson he's learned from his family and one that's stood him in good stead in his short, fast-tracked career.

Tonus went through an ultra-quick progression - his first GP season was in 2009 when he piloted a KTM to 16th in the MX2 series. The following year he was signed to race alongside Ken Roczen on a <u>Teka</u> Suzuki and he leap-frogged up to seventh in a season that ended on a high with his first podium at the Italian finale.

For 2011 he'll be racing for Steve Dixon's Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha team so we headed off to Valence in France to have a chat with the rising Swiss star ahead of his British championship debut at Little Silver...

**DBR:** The Meyrinos Motocross Club in Geneva is where it all starts for the aspiring stars of Swiss MX..

AT: "The Meyrinos has always been my club since I was a child, it's where I began learning how to ride motocross when I was four years old. It's very close to where I live so I always used their MX track and also when I was practising SX on the 85cc. But I began to ride much more in France as it is also close to Geneva and the level of racing there was always higher than in Switzerland so it was a logical decision to spend more time doing the French championship. They have great tracks so I learned a lot doing those races - I went there regularly for at least five years since I started on the 65cc."

DBR: How is the Swiss MX scene - are there

AT: "It's not popular at all – it's really far from the recognition other sports have as there is no media covering it on a regular basis. It's really difficult to get people to know you this

way, they don't even hear about the sport let alone know the riders they have. MotoGP and road racing are popular because Thomas Luthi was 125cc world champion in 2005 but motocross is the opposite."

DBR: And your family, how much does their support mean to you?

AT: "My family has been backing me since forever - it's due to them that I find myself here. We've always been very close - my mom and dad follow me to every practice and race ever since I started. My sister has been a lot with me also. We get in the camper and just think of it as a bit of holiday every weekend with all the travelling, it's really a passion for all of us."

DBR: We know that Charly Tonus - besides being your dad, coach and counsellor - was also one of Switzerland's best riders... AT: "He was a good rider – he just started a bit later than usual but he still became champion in Switzerland and got some good results at the GPs. He was generally in the top 15 although on some occasions he got in the top 10 and that was pretty good for a Swiss rider in the past. When I was one month old I was already going to the races with my mom. Motorcycle racing became my passion really quick, I just knew I was going to do this for the rest of my life. All the signs were there already and I had my first race when I was seven.'

DBR: There's a strong sporting tradition among the Tonus family...

AT: "My uncle Jean-Marc was a full-contact [martial arts] world champion - a great sportsman - and even my grandfather was a road cycling champion so the Tonus family has always had a strong connection with sports. When I started riding the support I got from all the family was immediate. My dad has been totally focused on me when I became professional he even sold the business he had to spend more of his time dedicated to my career. What more can I ask?"

DBR: You finished 2010 on a high with a podium at the last GP of the season in Italy and then you won the Berck sur Mer beach race beating Stefan Everts...

AT: "It was like a dream really. I hadn't been riding on the sand that much before it so I wasn't well prepared for it. Before that race I was only practising supercross to be ready for Bercy. I was riding very relaxed on my GP bike just trying to have some fun and it ended up that way. Good stuff happens!" >>



DBR: How much have you improved in the sand? In the past you've struggled so how did you turn things around? Was it the experience acquired with Suzuki in Belgium?

AT: "Since I started to go to Belgium two years ago to live there with Georges Jobé my sand riding has improved. Georges has been a close friend of my dad for over 20 years now and he's also my coach - actually, they're like a team coaching me. Every time I train there with him my sand riding skills improve. I've never had a big step in my improvement, it's just a work in progress. What I can say now is that I enjoy riding in the sand - it's a good feeling."

# DBR: Then you got a third at the Geneva SX beating Gregory Aranda and finishing right behind Justin Brayton...

AT: "I was kind of riding in my home town so it felt really good. I hadn't raced supercross for maybe four or five years, only practising a lot. Then I find myself in Bercy which wasn't bad - I was sixth overall tied with Cairoli! I then went to Geneva without any kind of pressure - I wasn't expecting to get on the podium at all, I was

basically just thinking about using SX to make me more aggressive for motocross racing."

**DBR:** You dedicated your podium to Marc Ristori who's been in a wheelchair since 2007. Can you tell us about your relationship with Marc and his influence on you?

AT: "Marc is like a brother to me, we've been together since I started to ride as he used to ride and practice with my father at the time. He told me a lot about riding because he had great experience in supercross and motocross. After his accident we've been even closer than we were-- it's been tough for me when a thing like that happens to a person you relate to like a brother. He has been a great friend regarding all aspects in life. I really can't thank him enough and that's why I dedicated my podium to him because he totally deserves it.'

DBR: Since the Geneva SX you've become a new Swiss hero - a daily newspaper even described you as a 'modern time gladiator'! How does that make you feel?

he has to go to the supercross in Geneva as it is the event of the year for our sport there. If you're not there then nobody knows what you're doing - for instance, when the speaker announced my name on the first evening the reaction was of indifference and it was like my hometown. The spectators were only there to see the show and only a few of them knew that I was doing the world championship. But after seeing me riding and my results they started to follow my races enthusiastically - everyone was standing up and cheering when I was passing. Unbelievable! An incredible feeling..."

# DBR: Do you sometimes feel that everything's happening too fast?

AT: "Having my family with me at all times just makes me feel more relaxed, that's an advantage. I know why I do this sport - it's my way of life and I love it! That fact alone takes half of the pressure from it but of course I get tense, if I didn't I couldn't be a professional rider - even before practice I get anxious because I want to do well. If I have any kind of pressure it's only AT: "If a Swiss rider wants some media attention me creating it for myself, I don't get any of it from



# BIT FROM THE BOSS

### **FIVE MINUTES WITH STEVE DIXON**

As owner of Arnaud's new Bike It Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha team, Steve Dixon signed up the Swiss teen to race alongside 2010 Maxxis British MX2 champ Zach Osborne...

DBR: If it wasn't for Yamaha Europe putting forward this proposal would you have taken Tonus?

SD: "This wasn't at all in the plan – it was supposed to be an easy year – but I like a good challenge. I signed Zach for another two years in June and then I took Dougan for the MX1 and I was happy with that. The deal with Tonus came around after Yamaha Europe, who tried to sign him originally, asked me if I had any space on the team. Well, I really didn't have any space but I thought that it wasn't going to take a lot of effort to run him, you know, he's a good rider and he deserves a good chance."

# DBR: How do you rate him?

SD: "I've seen Arnaud at the GPs obviously and coming third at the last GP was good. He and Zach have battled quite a few times and I've also watched him when he was at Mallory Park. I think he can be pushing for podiums very regularly and some wins also, he's a good all-round rider. He knows Ken, he knows his competition very well and has a lot of motivation."

DBR: Do you reckon he can regularly challenge Zach? SD: "Yes, of course, it's good to have competition. We were speaking to Cosworth about Arnaud and they said that it's fantastic – most Formula One teams have two top drivers pushing each other. It speeds up development, it keeps everyone motivated and it keeps the drivers – or in this case the riders – on their toes because they know they're going out with the same equipment and if one is winning and the other is in 15th place for instance then..."

DBR: Speaking of F1, will there be any team orders? SD: "No, no team orders. They're on the same equipment – they set it up the way they like it but they will both get the same opportunity. If we need to take the number plate from one bike and put on the other it's no problem. We've always had a good team that's never hidden anything from each other and we've never had any competition between mechanics either, they're all behind a rider if he has any problem. Arnaud is already used to working with someone that is on the top like Roczen so he knows how to act with that and Zach wants a good team-mate so they can learn from each other. It's going to be good."

the outside as in a certain way being with my family protects me from that."

**DBR:** How come Valentin Teillet has a ride with your previous team when you finished seventh in the world standings? Wouldn't you have preferred to stay with them?

AT: "I was motivated to continue with Suzuki at the beginning but I didn't really know what was happening, they just told me that Teka had left. I then took too much time to decide on continuing with Suzuki or with Marcus Bau [Teka's MD] as I have a great relation with both. During the time I was thinking about my opportunities they took Valentin which I understand – I was then out of the team because they needed more budget if they wanted to secure a second rider."

**DBR:** Would you have liked to continue with Teka and go to KTM? What kind of deal could you get with the 350?

AT: "At the time we had a possible deal to move to the MX1 class with DeCarli KTM but we were also talking about continuing on MX2 with

Jacky Martens which was a deal Marcus pushed really hard to get. I was so confused at the time because I liked the Suzuki and I really didn't know what to do – that's why I only found the deal with Steve so late. To be without a team so late in the year was not good for my mind."

# DBR: So Steve Dixon came to your rescue...

AT: "I only felt reassured when I finally found my deal with Steve, to leave Suzuki was not really easy for me. I feel like this is a good chance since I tried the bike very late in the year – just after Bercy. I actually already knew the bike was good because I rode with Zach during all last year."

# **DBR:** Did you feel like you were being compared to Ken Roczen all the time at Suzuki?

AT: "No, no, the team also took good care of me – it wasn't all about Kenny. There wasn't any problem like that, I think I had a great relationship with the team during the year and especially with Ken – he's a great guy to be with."



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# DBR: So how did the deal with Yamaha all come together?

AT: "Laurens from Yamaha Europe knew that I was looking for a team and called Steve who called me proposing his idea. I was very glad to hear from him and from that moment to trying the bike it all went very fast and after I rode it I was just like 'where do I sign?' He pushed really hard with his sponsors to find some more budget as the team was already full for the season - it was really nice of him to go through all that for me."

# DBR: Do you worry that you'll have the same thing going on like in Teka Suzuki with Zach taking the part of Kenny?

AT: "I can tell you already that is surely not going to be the same - I don't expect anything like that happening. I didn't really know him but since the first time I met Steve I had a good feeling about him, that he's doing the best for me. He went to Valence just to watch me riding and I could see how involved he was. I don't believe I'm going to have a first and second rider situation.'

# DBR: Describe your first impressions of the Yamaha and compare it with last year's ride.

AT: "The immediate difference I felt was the engine which is very powerful, I was so impressed with it. I'm also happy with the suspension as we are working with Ohlins and they are really concerned with the rider's opinions and they have not too many teams which in a way is good for us. It didn't take me too much time to get used to the Yamaha - only some small adjustments were needed."

# DBR: What do you know about British racing having only ridden at Hawkstone and Mallory?

AT: "Well, I know that there is always a good crowd and they know a lot about motocross so I like that. Looking at some pictures from the British tracks they look like some Swiss tracks, all natural. It's going to be fun to get to know a new championship."

# DBR: Where are you going to live during the season?

AT: "I'll live in Belgium with Anthony Boissiere who is a close friend of mine so we'll be near

Jobé and my father is going there also so it's all good this way."

# **DBR:** Is the US part of your future plans?

AT: "It's more like part of my dreams! I know that I have to improve my riding here before going there but I only think of it as a dream I have, I'm more focused on what I'm doing at this moment here. It can be something that I would like to do in my life at some stage - to go there and just ride with those guys, since I was a child I think of that."

# DBR: Where do you see yourself then in a few vears time?

AT: "I think that the MX1 class could be good for me because my riding style is very smooth and I also like to ride the 450 during practice but I don't really think much about what I'm going to do in the future - I only think about the present!"

# DBR: Okay, that was the last question...

AT: "We're done? Amazing! That was the biggest interview I ever gave - one hour man! We're good, we're good!"



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# **NEW SENSATION!**

# BRITISH MX1 TITLE CONTENDER TOM CHURCH BREAKS OFF FROM A PUNISHING PRE-SEASON PREP PROGRAMME TO TRY HIS HAND AT SPRINT ENDUROS...

Words by Jonty Edmunds Photos by Nuno Laranjeira

hink of the places a rider with genuine British MX1 title aspirations might be in February and a forest in Mid Wales probably won't be one of them. California, Florida, Spain even - just about anywhere that has better weather than the UK - but certainly, definitely, absolutely not Mid Wales.

But on February 12 Mid Wales was exactly where Buildbase CCM's Tom Church could be found, nestled inconspicuously in the paddock of the opening round of the Husqvarna ACU British Sprint Enduro Championship. In between testing, racing supercross and generally getting things ready for the start of the domestic motocross season, TC opted to give woods racing a go. Here's what he made of his day in the forest...

"I'll be honest, I was shocked at just how hard some of the course looked when I walked the special test at the opening round of the sprint enduro championship. I'd never seen terrain like it before - let alone ridden anything of the sort - so I knew I was going to be in for a pretty tough day. And I was

"I pretty much thought to myself 'what the hell am I doing here' during the sighting lap. I'm used to having plenty of time to learn a track, not one lap. And I'm used to motocross tracks, not enduro courses in the forest. Unlike anything I've ridden before it took a while to get into and even then it was an eye-opener. But I enjoyed it and learned a hell of a lot.

"Why did I decide to give the event a go? Because I can now and I wanted to give it a go after watching one of the events last year. A few years ago when I was focused on GPs I'd have been in Spain during February putting in the motos and generally riding every day. Now I'm a little older and focusing on races in the UK I figured I'd give it a go. I like trying different stuff but it's not always been possible to do other races in the past. Now I can.

"I was well aware that I couldn't do anything stupid. Thorpey would have killed me. I really wanted to do well in the British Supercross Championship

and with the start of the motocross season just around the corner there was no way I was going to go all out and take any big risks. My plan was to push where I felt safe and just enjoy the day, which I did.

"I knew I wouldn't be on the pace straight away but finishing as the 31st fastest rider on the opening lap was a bit of a shock. I wasn't expecting miracles but I was expecting to do a bit better than that. But getting up to speed over terrain that I wasn't used to riding or had any real time to get used to was difficult. I guess it's what enduro racing is all about but it's hard. Weaving in and out of the trees takes some getting used to.

"The fact that I wasn't racing a motocross track was the biggest difference to what I'm used to. Racing through a forest is night and day different to anything else I've done and being able to read the terrain and know where the best lines are in an instant is seriously difficult. I almost felt a bit claustrophobic riding in the trees at times One thing I've done plenty of



# **HONOURS EVEN!**

KNIGHTER AND SAGAR TOP ELITE

Enduro 3 world champ David Knight and series newcomer Tom Sagar claim a win apiece at the opening two rounds of the 2011 Husqvarna ACU British Sprint Enduro Championship where a tough and enjoyable round one is followed by a rain-drenched - and shortened - round two.

With an eventual winning margin of one-and-a-half minutes Knighter sets the bar high at the end of a tough opening round but doesn't have things all his own way. With Sagar topping the first test following a costly fall from the Manxman it looks like DK might have his work cut out. But by returning to the top to win each of the remaining five tests the KTM star asserts his dominance to claim a comfortable win.

'I made a few mistakes on the opening test which cost me time," explains Knighter, pleased to have bounced back to claim the round one win. "It took me a little while to get into a rhythm but as things got rougher I started riding better

With Sagar a strong second the final Elite class podium spot goes to Greg Evans who like Knight gets faster as the day progresses. Si Wakely ensures a memorable return to racing following his temporary retirement from the sport last year by grabbing fourth on his Husaberg while Jamie Lewis claims fifth ahead of Paul Edmondson.

At the head of the Expert class veteran woods charger Wyn Hughes dominates the proceedings to finish a country mile ahead of his nearest challenger David Lloyd-Jones while Manxman Matthew Lund places third on his sprint enduro debut.

Little known Aussie rider Ben Burrell sets a blisteringly quick pace in the Under 19 class and despite some talented competition makes light work of the conditions to secure a dominant win, some four minutes clear of overall U19 runner-up Joe Jones.

Topping the Under 23 class, Gas Gas-mounted Danny McCanney just manages to get the better of fellow Manxman Alex Rockwell as seven seconds separate the pair. With neither rider making the best of starts both end the day very much on the pace and inside the top 10 of the overall.

Day two ends early and with Tom Sagar at the top of the Elite results. Topping the opening and third and final test he finishes ahead of Knight who like on day one makes a steady start to the proceedings before taking water into his 500 EXC on lap three.

"I'm really pleased with the way things have gone for me," comments Sagar. "It's a shame the weather turned bad but I've enjoyed the event. David was too strong on day one but I put in a good test on the first lap today and things worked out well.

With Knighter pushed down to the runner-up spot Greg Evans matches his day one result of third while Daryl Bolter improves to fourth with Jamie Lewis fifth. David Lloyd-Jones gets one over day one Expert winner Wyn Hughes to top the class as Hughes gets himself stuck on lap two, losing well

Aussie Ben Burrell again sets the pace in the Under 19 class and while his winning margin isn't as big as at round one he places comfortably ahead of Joe Jones and Jamie McCanney. Jamie's brother Danny's the rider to beat again in the Under 23 class where he repeats his round one victory and finishes ahead of Irish motocross racer Stuart Edmonds with Ashley Wood third on his little 125.



over the years is riding in mud but riding in a forest is completely different. The ruts are different, the traction is different, everything is different.

"I soon learned that you can't go at things red hot. You have to pace yourself a little bit, push hard in some areas and not others. I felt like I was riding well in the open areas, it was just in the trees and the ruts that I found it tough. A forest is a bit like a sand track - you have to know where learn that overnight.

"It's hard to gauge your speed, too. But I enjoyed not riding bar-to-bar with other riders. If I could see another rider ahead of me I'd push to try and catch them and hope to pass them. Knowing how hard to push and where to push is something you get from experience. Knowing where you can make time and knowing where you'll only lose time by trying to go too fast is what's really to go, where the best lines are. But you don't important. But like I said it was hard for



Stuart Edmonds and Jamie Lewis – both did well but I wasn't surprised by that. Like me I don't think they really knew what to expect but they got their heads around it. You have to push hard but you can't get too stressed about things. I'm sure that with more time to get used to special test racing we could all do better - I know I could.

"But I'm certainly not disappointed with

David Knight's the Antonio Cairoli of woods riding – he's unbelievable. But after a steady start I started getting used to it and knowing where the track went. After the first lap things improved a lot and towards the end of the day my times started to improve. I'd lost too much time early on to do better in the overall results but I was happy with eighth and not being too far away from



# **2011 DATES & VENUES**

ROUND 1 - 2nd & 3rd April - FatCat MotoParc ROUND 2 - 7th & 8th May - Landrake ROUND 3 – 11th & 12th June – Whitby ROUND 4 – 30th & 31st July – Canada Heights
ROUND 5 – 27th & 28th August – Hawkstone Park ROUND 6 – 3rd & 4th September – Desertmartin, NI ROUND 7 - 24th & 25th September - TBC

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the top five or six.

"I learned a hell of a lot during the day. I always knew that my bike set-up wouldn't be perfect but I know where it can be improved now. I was racing a motocross bike so it was never going to be right for the conditions or the track but it worked well considering. I guess the biggest thing I learned is that reading enduro terrain and riding fast straight away is a real skill. The top riders are pretty much as fast on the first lap as they are at the end of the day which is amazing. I've got a huge amount of respect for what enduro riders do.

"Being able to make split second decisions

about line choice, being able to adapt to the changing track, not making any mistakes and being consistent lap after lap is pretty much what being good at special test racing is all about. But that takes time to learn. For me the whole day was one big learning curve. If I do any more, which I'd like to, I'll know what to expect as I knew next to nothing before the event started. But I soaked up everything that was going on and am a lot more clued up now. Like most things you can't expect to do your best first time around but I know what to expect now.

"What was cool was that there was a lot of

mutual respect between all the riders. Not going at it 40 at a time means things are very different to motocross. The atmosphere's really relaxed which I liked - and even as the new guy loads of riders offered me advice and were happy to chat. As soon as you put your goggles on you race as hard as you can but once the test is finished everything's really chilled out.

"Will I do any more sprints? It depends on my schedule but I'd like to. I feel I know what to expect now so I'd like to see if I could do better. I enjoyed the event even though it was completely different to what I'm used to. It was a great experience."



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# **CLEAN SWEEP FOR TEAM CTI AT SUPERCROSS CHAMPS**

# Congratulations to Team CTi members Steven Sword and Tom Church who start the 2011 season with two British Titles.

The final round of the British Open Supercross Championship was held at the Liverpool Echo Arena on Saturday18th February, and was dominated by the Buildbase CCM duo. A win in the head to head bout for fellow Team CTi member Alex Snow made it a clean sweep for Team CTi.

The two CCM team mates cemented their places in both finals with heat wins and when the gate dropped for the Open final, Stephen took the holeshot and built up a healthy lead, meanwhile Tom gated badly exiting the first corner around mid pack but put in a blinding first lap making his way up to fourth. Slowly reeling in fellow Alex Snow and moving up to second, one lap from the flag Tom made a mistake and just managed to finish the race in third place, enough for him to take the British Open Supercross Championship with Stephen taking the race win.

The final race of the night was the SX1 pro final and when the gate dropped it was a Buildbase CCM 1-2, with Stephen taking the holeshot and Tom close in second, the positions stayed like this until Tom fell on a rough corner managing to pick his bike up and retain his second position, by three quarter stage, Tom reeled in Stephen to go on and take the race win with Stephen in second giving Tom and Buildbase CCM Racing their second title of the night.

Buildbase CCM Racings' sporting director Dave Thorpe commented "the team came here to build on winter training in preparation for the British Maxxis opening round. Taking the win and the titles will increase the riders' confidence.





# TOOMUCH COUNTY?

AT JUST 18 YEARS OLD AND WITH THREE YEARS GP EXPERIENCE UNDER HIS BELT, MEL POCOCK'S GOING BACK TO BASICS WITH THE NEW RELENTLESS SUZUKI BY TAS TEAM...

Words by Jeff Perrett Photos by Sutty

e's only just 18 and yet Mel Pocock has been a GP racer for three years. This year he won't be racing a full season of world championship events but armed with his new Relentless Suzuki by TAS deal he sees this as a big step forward.

Honesty is a bit of a theme you'll pick up running through this interview and I'll start the trend by saying I don't know Mel as well as I do some of the other British pro riders. Probably due to the fact he hasn't been a pro that long really and, to be fair, I've never really made the effort to get to know him better. What I do know about Mel though, I like. He always seems to be smiling and enjoying himself and he certainly has a strong family ethic around him with all three of his brothers also racing the sport we love.

After a successful – if not blistering – youth career he came into the adult pro ranks and within what seemed like a blink of an eye was lining up behind the startgate on the world stage riding for Steve Dixon's Yamaha team. I reckon he's handled himself well since then because it's a huge step-up no matter what your age, let alone for a 15-year-old. Not every rider will take to it like a duck to water as Ken Roczen and Jeffrey Herlings have.

So it came as a surprise to me to hear that Mel was not only leaving Britain's most established and experienced grand prix team but also that he would no longer be racing the world championship. What I have seen in Mel is an assured self-belief and confidence and I thought he'd be out there plying his trade again this year, chipping away at it and looking to break into the top 10 like Jake Nicholls.

"To be honest I've done three years of GP racing and I always felt I was back pack and that got to my head a little bit," says a direct to the point Mel when we finally get started on the interview after waiting for some bowel movement on his behalf! "So me and my family started to discuss it and we all decided the right decision is to take some time out of GPs and focus on getting in that habit of racing for podiums and wins again on a regular basis and build back up to GPs with more experience and maturity. Steve's team is a GP team and that's what he does, that's the focus and the priority. He does the British championship and it means a lot to him and the team but GPs are more important.

"So we spoke to Steve and he was cool with it all, he understands and we started looking around for other rides. We tried a few bikes and few teams but it didn't seem to fit and it was looking like we'd stay

with Steve but maybe just concentrate on racing in the UK but then Relentless Suzuki by TAS came along. We went out to Belfast to see them and once we were there we thought 'well let's crack on then!' They have an impressive set-up and it felt right. It's a good change for me – a new bike, new people and a new challenge. If it goes well then we can progress together and maybe I can go back into the world championship with them? We'll probably do a few GPs this year."

Listening to Mel explain his decision I got a strong sense of a young man who really has his head screwed on. It takes a strong character to admit that maybe it isn't going to plan and swallow a hefty bite of pride. I applaud him for that, especially for having the foresight to see the bigger picture...

"I'm not saying I didn't enjoy the GPs – I loved every single race – but it was hard for my mind always being beaten like that. But I've learned from that and that's why we've made the decision we have. I think it's like one step back for me to take three forward. I was 15 when I started doing the world championship and I know Roczen and Herlings came in and were running out front at GP races at that age but I don't think it's fair to compare everyone to that. Everyone can peak at different times. I was just a UK schoolboy rider really and we were fortunate enough to go straight into GPs.

"The experience was pretty mind-blowing at times. I'd be there thinking 'that's Cairoli down there at the other end of the startgate' – I was more in awe of who was overtaking me than racing them. It was such an awesome experience. I think it was more of a shock to me than any pressure. I didn't feel that until last year really. Because I'd been doing them for three years people – including myself – expected better results. Jake [Nicholls] started to break into the top 10 and everyone expected me to do the same.

"I'd race Zach and Jake at British championships and not be far off but be back in the 20s at GPs and just couldn't ever seem to bridge that gap. It's not like I wasn't trying. I'd run in the top 10 a few times but then make some mistakes and drop back right at the end. Those guys are so on it out there at the front, you make one mistake and they're just straight past you like a road race. But at least I've experienced it — racing GPs has been unreal really."

experienced it – racing GPs has been unreal really."
As I said from the outset, Mel comes across as honest, quietly confident and appears to take everything in his stride but clearly underneath all that the fire burns and it seems he expected





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more of himself. So I ask him if he felt the pressure from his team and others around him by jumping into GPs, especially by pretty much going straight in from youth motocross.

"There was no pressure on me from Steve in any way, shape or form or anyone else for that matter. It only came from myself and from my head. If I wasn't doing how I wanted to do I'd beat myself up mentally. Rather than coming in from a race and saying to myself 'well actually I did all right that time' I'd come in and say to myself 'what am I doing wrong?' so now I've learned that and grown up a bit more."

So at 18 years of age with lessons learned Mel takes a stronger mental approach into 2011 with his new team. With fresh emphasis and with him focusing on not necessarily a new target but maybe just not as many he's in good shape, especially with a new trainer and the excitement of all the change.

"I have a lot going on at the minute. I've been training down in Devon a lot with Dave Thorpe. He's been teaching me how to start the bike up, pull away, change gears that kind of thing really! I think he used to be quite a good club racer in his time from what I'm told! No, obviously, working with Dave is incredible, I mean he's a legend and knows what it takes to win at the highest level possible. I have so much respect for him — it's hard not to, the man is a three-time world champion.

"If you can't learn from someone like that then forget it. Dave is brilliant at telling you how it is and what to do to improve it. I feel like I'm in better hands now, maybe because the target has changed a little. This winter I've stayed in the UK and not gone to Spain or America like before. I've thrown it out there and just wanted to tough it out at home. I've been training with Dave since November 1 and I've trained and trained and trained. I feel more focused, relaxed

and ready than ever before."

Clearly he's not messing about. He knows if he steps it up at home with his new team and really gets stuck in and starts mixing it with Osborne, Tonus and Nicholls in the Maxxis British championship and does the business at the Red Bull Pro Nationals it will bolster his wounded confidence. He's also extremely confident in his new team and the decision to sign with them.

"My new team is absolutely brilliant. I love it already. Everything is really well organised and they're on the ball with everything. I'm not saying Steve wasn't, he just has his style of preparing and does so much more than just manage his team on a day-to-day basis so sometimes it can feel a little bit like organised chaos because he's so involved with everything about the team. But that's the passion that makes him a success.

"The TAS team know what the score is even though they've been out of motocross for a while and it's back to being a brand-new set-up again. Adam Lyons [Team Manager] and Philip Neill [Team Owner] are both ex GP racers with loads of experience. They can definitely put a good bike and team set-up together with the resources they have and their knowledge, not just from motocross but from their Superbike team. When I turned up in their workshop I thought 'this is where it's at – I want to be riding for them'. The only real downside is that the workshop is in Northern Ireland whereas Steve's place wasn't too far from home but that isn't a problem at all, it was just convenient.

"The bike is really good. I instantly felt good on it and I'm not just saying that. I think the fuel injection makes such a difference. You can start it up fresh in the morning and hold it wide open and it doesn't bog or anything and it will only get better the more we work together with it."

# Mel On...

JASON DOUGAN

"Dougan has to be the craziest guy in British motocross. Now he's been my team-mate I've got to know him and he's so random and comes up with some really funny stuff. Not being mean but not exactly being nice either – he's not quite there! Some days he seems normal and then other days he's out there and you think 'who is this guy? He must've eaten something funny!' He's such a good laugh to be around."

### STEVE DIXON

"I haven't got a bad word to say about Steve. He took me from a schoolboy hacker to a GP racer and I'll thank him all the way for that. I haven't burned any bridges with anyone and Bradley is still there riding with Steve's team. Honestly, I don't think there's another person out there in British motocross that puts in the hours that Steve does. He'll be there until 3am on a regular basis — it's ridiculous. He has so much pride in his racing and I'll always admire him for that. Although sorting things out like flights and stuff with him is a nightmare! I guess it's because the racing and getting the bikes perfect is so important to him."





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# Mel On...

"It's got to be Tony Cairoli, he's the man. He always goes out and does the business on and off the track. He's just himself, taking time to talk to everyone and signing autographs but also having fun and finding the time to be prepared properly. I think he has the balance perfect. I look up to him a lot. As far as racing friends go I've got to say Zach Osborne is the man. We have a great relationship - it's like he's my older brother. He stayed at our house for eight months when he first came over.

### **EUROPE OR USA?**

"I like to be at home so I don't think racing in America is a career for me. I'd like to maybe try doing the AMA nationals one year just to say I've done it but no more than that. You have to be willing to do supercross and be good at it to succeed in America and it's not my style. In my blood is to race motocross and let it hang out. You can't just go out on an AMA SX track and pick it up unless you're something special or you've been practising it for a while. Nah, motocross is where it's at for me - two 30-minute motos flat-out. That to me is the ultimate.





Take the slight dent in his confidence last season out of the equation for a moment and it's clear that Mel is a buoyant young man, full of beans, at ease with himself and the world around him. There's no sense that the world owes him or anything like that. He comes across as calm, managed and precise in his outlook and attitude towards life. That's obviously part of his DNA but he's also quick to point out that a good upbringing and very supportive family play

"I've been brought up well and to always say please and thank you. I'm a bit of a farm boy really in that I try to keep down to earth. I'm not a Ken Roczen, Jeffrey Herlings or Stefan Everts or anyone like that but I try my hardest at everything, always try to improve and be appreciative of anything I've been given whether it's advice, sponsorship, whatever, that's what I've been taught. I think if you always push to get the best out of yourself then it's that little bit easier to be happy.

"I never big myself up or anything like that. I come to the startline of every race with the same attitude as the one before regardless of the result. I know I've done my work so I know I'm ready, that's how I get my confidence up. I believe I can win and be a champion through hard work and being a little patient with realistic goals. That's why I'm not racing the world championship this year. Obviously, I hope it works out - it may turn out to be a major mistake but I'm confident it's the best thing for my career.

Family comes first and clearly for young Mel Jnr - his father is also called Mel - that's very much the case. He understands that getting the kids out on the track isn't that simple for any parent whether it be financially or emotionally, especially when you consider there's four Pococks currently racing all over the country.

"I don't know how my mum and dad do it. My granddad comes along too when he can, he loves it and he supports me too. He also pays me a pound per point that I score. When I was

racing GPs if they couldn't make it they'd be texting all the time. All my brothers ride and we all come in with a smile on our faces - it's just what we do as a family, we all love it. I don't think we're any different to most people in motocross it's just that there are four brothers all racing! My dad used to race and the older he gets the better he was. He was an established rider and then I came about and that was it, everything got put into me to ride bikes. Mum didn't stand a chance did she - especially with the others all coming along.

"I started racing on my sixth birthday at an evening meeting at Staplecross near Hastings on an XR70. It was the youngest age I could start racing at the time. Dad put it in third gear for me and I kept it in that gear all the way round. I was terrible. I was lapped three times. I got to this bombhole and stopped on the top and started crying because I didn't want to go down it because it was too steep. My dad ran halfway across the field and pushed me down it!"













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# Mel On...

"Bradley's so determined. I've lost count of how many times he's broken his leg and he still keeps coming back for more. He believes in himself so much, sometimes too much. At home he's quiet and on his computer and then about 10 girls turn up - so credit to him for that.

"I'd describe Brett as a real steady Eddie. He's the kind of rider that will win a championship but never win a race. It's different on Call of Duty though - he never loses on that! Honestly, it's unbelievable. He's got his gamer's chair and his mouthpiece wrapped round and he's in his zone. He's not as keen as the rest of us to go riding all the time but once he gets to a race he's into it.

'Matthew's mad! Mad Math we call him. He'll do stuff like holeshot it and then three corners later lay it down and be last, come up through and do it again. He's like that at home too ...



encouragement, eh? Mel's not really complaining though, he's thankful for all that his parents have done for him and with sibling rivalries running through the family he's always kept on his toes. Intrigued by the dynamics of the family I ask Mel what it's like being the eldest brother.

"Ah, it's cool. I think we're all treated fairly and the brotherly love and all that is respectful but there's massive competition within our family. Bradley would always be looking to better me and then Brett is a little better than Matthew on the bike so all Matt wants to do is beat Brett - it's awesome and funny. We'll go practising and I'll be saying 'Bradley, just chill out man!' because he'll be flat-out all the time.

"Me and Bradley are normally the instigators of arguments and fights and will set Brett and Matty off. We'll egg them on to do something and they'll try to out-do each other to prove it to us. They'll do something stupid then we'll walk away and mum or dad will come along and go mental at them both. We'll go off and laugh at them

them all ride and support them for sure, I'd never stay at home. We're a big family that feels even bigger with our regular crew, the Osmastons. We get on great with them because their family is like ours and they live quite close. We all look out for each other and encourage each other. When we get to the races we all hang out together. Every motocross family has their best friends and people around them to keep spirits high, the Osmastons are ours. It's great.

'Motocross is a drug for sure but it's got to be right at home I reckon. If you're having fun as a family and mates then you're going to do better out on the race track.

I couldn't agree with Mel more and with his new team and fresh approach I believe just like him – that he's moving forwards not backwards. And that's in every sense from being a motocross racer to a maturing young man. Fair play to him for that and bloody good luck to him I say because more often than not you make your own...





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# EBIRTH

**NEW MOMENTUM THANKS TO THE** 

Words by Jon Urry Photos by Jon Urry/Husqvarna archive

he last decade hasn't been kind to one of the most famous names in off-road motorcycles. Under the financially unpredictable ownership of the Cagiva Group it's fair to say Husqvarna struggled. Investment was lacking. the factory's production facilities were tired and it was starting to damage the brand's reputation as spare parts supply and reliability took a turn for the worse. With Cagiva's enigmatic boss Claudio Castiglioni selling off debt-ridden parts of the company the future looked gloomy.

Then in 2007 everything changed.

BMW Motorrad was looking for a way of expanding its motorcycle business into the off-road sector and what better path than to take over an already established brand? A reported 93,000,000 Euros changed hands and the Swedish company that became Italian now

gained German owners. Three years on and the results are starting to show but it has been anything but an easy ride for all concerned.

"When BMW took over Husqvarna it was in a relatively bad shape," says Husqvarna President Klaus Allisat. "One of the major problems was that there was no financing for the company which is why suppliers weren't being paid and this led to issues with the spare parts side of the business as well as quality control and so on. Servicing is a big concern to off-road customers, they require parts immediately. So we have made this a top priority."

But this was no simple task and required

even more investment to the tune of nearly 50,000,000 Euros from BMW. Husqvarna was spread between two sites with a lake in between them and consolidating the company required building a whole new factory as well as installing a new working ethos.

"We had to separate the company from the Cagiva Group which was very difficult as they were linked together on one site. It was only across the lake in Varese but the engine assembly line, R&D and purchasing was with Cagiva. We had to move everything over and build a new Husqvarna factory on the original site to accommodate the whole company rather than just the assembly line.

"We have reinvested in new equipment, built a whole new factory and put the level of our assembly up to the standard of BMW. Pretty much the whole of the last three years has been dedicated to bringing Husqvarna up to the precise standards of the BMW company."

So, with a total of nearly 150,000,000 Euros invested in Husqvarna, what exactly is BMW hoping to achieve with the company?



# **HISTORY LESSON**

### FROM GUNS TO GLORY...

Husqvarna was formed in the Swedish village of Huskvarna as a firearms manufacturer in 1689 but in 1877 the Swedish became less violent and the company started producing other metal items such as sewing machines.

In 1903 it produced its first motorcycle using imported engines and by 1919 the company was producing and racing its own bikes and motors. Considerable off-road success followed in the 1950s and 1960s and even legendary actor Steve McQueen raced a Husky in the 1970s.

In 1986 the Cagiva Group purchased Husqvarna and the company moved to Italy where it has remained ever since. In 2007 BMW bought the company from Cagiva for 93,000,000 Euros. To date Husqvarna has won 78 world championships in motocross, enduro and supermoto.





"If you think of BMW and the Mini story, that is pretty much the same thing as it is doing with Husqvarna. We took a very strong brand in Mini and developed the company with new cars to attract new younger customers who would eventually switch to BMW. We are aiming to do the same with Husqvarna.

"People start riding off-road at a very young age and progress to the bigger bikes before possibly stopping off-road at around 30 and looking at road bikes. BMW saw Husqvarna as a strong off-road name and the hope is that when they want to buy a road bike they will chose a BMW. We want to connect Husqvarna very closely with BMW so that when people stop riding competitively off-road they switch to a GS or a cruiser, they stick to motorcycling but change brand to the BMW side of the business."





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Although this may seem on the face of it a very one-sided relationship, the truth of the matter is that BMW's investment brings with it much more than just financial support. Currently Husqvarna makes around 12,000 motorcycles a year, something that the company is looking to expand upon with BMW's backing and resources.

"To make Husqvarna a success we simply need better products than our competitors. We need to be lighter, to have a higher performance or have innovations that our competitors can't afford because they don't have the funds or expertise. In the motorcycle world there are very few companies who can do this but BMW is one of them.

"The motorcycle side has been able to take ABS, traction control etc from the car world which has speeded up development and now Husqvarna can also benefit from this technology. At the end of the day Husqvarna is a relatively small company – we make around 12,000 bikes a year – but our target is to reach 30-35,000 in the next three years so we need to not only gain some share of the market from our competitors but also launch new models using BMW's technology."

A three-fold increase in just three years seems optimistic to say the least, especially considering the off-road world and the tough economic climate. However, Husqvarna is looking beyond its traditional dirtbike stomping ground and, like KTM before it, expanding its model range to include a greater number of purely on-road vehicles.

"I don't think the off-road market will expand much so we will have a conquest strategy with Husqvarna, we will try and take market share from our competitors. But at the same time we will be going into on-road segments in a very similar way to KTM over the last few years. They expanded from purely off-road to a stage where they now have quite a significant on-road portfolio. We have a couple of very interesting bikes coming out this year and we feel there is a lot of potential in them."

There are very strong rumours - not to mention several bikes hidden under red covers within the R&D department - that suggest Husqvarna is set to launch two new large capacity road bikes at the end of 2011. Again, in much the same way as KTM started, they will be semi-familiar territory and are expected to be a large supermoto and an adventure bike using BMW's F800 parallel twin motor which Husqvarna is thought to have bored out to 900cc from its current 798cc format. Considering BMW already has several models based around its F800 engine - one of which is the off-road F800GS - is there not a possibility of Husqvarna stepping on its parent company's toes? Not according to Allisat.

"There will always be some overlap between Husqvarna and BMW but we intend to differentiate our brand from BMW. We have a strong heritage and Italian design that is totally different to anything at BMW and we want to use this to attract a younger customer or a more fashionable one - a customer who is a bit of a show-off, who will appreciate our designs. If you look at the bikes that we will be launching this year they are quite revolutionary - you will need to be guite self-confident to own them, not be afraid to say 'I have the coolest bike out there' and we need to develop the brand to help those people find us. It is what Mini did in the past. The whole system of selling the product needs to be targeted to this audience."



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And speaking of the younger audience, are we going to see Husqvarna making more 125cc bikes to draw new riders into the brand?

"BMW has no intention of entering the 125 segment so I think the future lies in the off-road sector and the smaller capacity engine attracting the younger audience - there may be some expansion in that, it is one thing we are looking at. The 125 sector is very price sensitive, KTM has been developing its bike with Bajaj and we are also in contact with a supplier in Asia and are in the process of developing a product in this range to overcome the cost issues.'

Developing a new range of on-road bikes is one thing, getting them to the customer is another. The off and on-road sector are two very different markets and few dealerships are experienced at selling in both areas, making it tricky for an off-road manufacturer to make an impression in the on-road world. Are we likely to see radical changes to the Husqvarna distribution network? Possibly even incorporating the brand within established BMW showrooms?

"We are in the process of changing the sales network. There will always be separate dealership for the pure off-road and on-road side of the business but we believe that with the introduction of new on-road Husqvarna products there will be a time when BMW dealership will also sell Husqvarna products. We have been piloting this in Spain, Greece and Switzerland and it may be the way forward but we need to see if it works as the off-road customer is very different to the on-road one."

With all this talk of on-road bikes will Husqvarna be reducing its interest in the off-road sector, the area the company built its reputation on? While Allisat admits that he predicts in three years time around 30 per cent of Husqvarna's production will be pure road bikes, off-road is

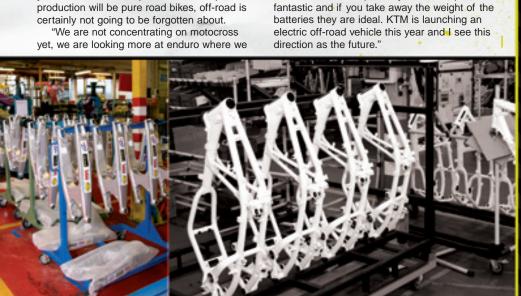
are already successful. Motocross success requires huge investment of money and at the moment we are just looking at what the motocross requires and what we need to develop before working out our strategy. A lot like BMW did with the S1000RR, we will study our competitors and then start from scratch to develop the bike that will be the best from the very beginning."

Considering the impact on the road bike market and racetrack the S1000RR has had since its launch in 2010, Husqvarna's competitors should take this statement very seriously indeed. There is no doubt that with 78 world championships already under its belt Husqvarna knows how to build a wining bike. now with BMW's backing and technological resources the R&D department must be straining at the leash to get to work.

So with its finances now in order and a new production facility up and running, where does Allisat see Husqvarna's future heading?

"At the moment everything is going against the motorcycle industry but there will always be a place for motorcycling as a leisure activity both on and off-road as it is so much fun. When the economy picks up and people have money and are looking for an adrenalin kick they will look towards motorcycles and we need to be able to support this.

'Obviously for the combustion engine it will become more and more tough, especially in Europe where it is pretty much a closed shop, so I feel electric vehicles will play a more dominant role in the next 10 years. They have no noise or pollution and I feel the off-road world will certainly go into electric vehicles. If you think about it there are many, many advantages - the motor suits enduro perfectly as the torque is fantastic and if you take away the weight of the batteries they are ideal. KTM is launching an electric off-road vehicle this year and I see this direction as the future.





# QUALITY CONTROL

With over 10,000,000 Euros spent on the building alone the new production facility at Casinetta de Biandronno is a state of the art motorcycle assembly plant. To help banish the demons of the past and conform with BMW's strict guidelines, the factory contains a number of rooms dedicated to quality control as well as a whole design department and racing lab.

The engines are assembled on two production lines before being moved to another line where they are slotted into frames and the whole bike assembled. The lines currently run at eight vehicles an hour and around 13,000 Husqvarnas a year are produced. The factory's designed to operate at three times this capacity, ready for future expansion.

Every single engine is dyno tested before being inserted into a frame and every finished bike is also dynoed to ensure it is up to standard, something that didn't happen in the past. Everywhere you look inside the factory there are new machines, new tools and new buildings and you get a real feeling of a company that has suddenly won the lottery and bought everything that it has always wanted but never been able to afford.

Away from the production facilities the 'Centrostile' department is a whole area dedicated to designing future Husky products. Inside this super-secretive area the team can create life size models of future bikes as well as design parts and complete bikes on computers. The Centrosile is so well equipped the team managed to create the Mille3 concept bike in less than five months although to be fair the engine is made of plastic...





# ACIDTEST

THE OPENING ROUND OF THE 2011 BRITISH ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP? WITH WAKKER STILL WOUNDED LLEWELYN PAVEY STEPS UP TO THE PLATE TO PUT THE TE250 HUSOVARNA THROUGH ITS PACES...

Words by Llewelyn Pavey Photos by Llewelyn Pavey and Simon Hewitt

usqvarna are in a strange place. They have huge backing from BMW and are pushing hard to step out from the KTM shadow that has been cast over the world of enduro bikes. There's no doubt the ambition is there with the whole UK distribution being redesigned - new dealers, great deals, the whole package. But it doesn't mean anything if the bikes ride like crap.

A couple of years back Husqvarna completely redesigned their 250F. Starting with the motocross bike, they worked from the ground up and then gave it a funky name - the X-Light. It didn't stand out from the crowd all that much, it was a vast improvement on the old machine but in the world of MX where Japan and KTM rule it got pushed into the storeroom. The next year came the enduro version and while no-one said it was a bad bike, it wasn't an EXC-slayer and the only people that appeared to buy them were those who didn't like orange.

When I was offered the chance to ride one at the first round of the BEC I jumped at the chance. Having been on the orange bandwagon along with most of the rest of the UK for the last few years I was excited to compare, contrast and fully prepped to pick out every little fault.

The one thing I don't think anybody can fault Husky on is looks - the TE250 is a stunner! Its sharp, sleek lines make it look like a true race bike and the red and white colour scheme is real purdy..

Rolling the bike out of the shop it doesn't feel all that different to any other bike but after loading it up and moving the bike around it's clear that over the past few years Husky have improved one area of their bike building significantly. The attention to detail is much improved, everything looks much more - if I dare borrow the expression from KTM - 'ready to race'! It's the little things that are nice like the rear mudguard that's been designed so it doesn't cut your hand in half when you need to lift the back. Like I said, little things...

I felt the Muntjac was as good an event as any to test a bike - it's physical, sandy and demanding on a bike's suspension and handling. I did however forget that it's ridiculously demanding on the rider as well...

I took my new, gorgeous steed out for a guick shakedown on the Friday before the race just to get a feel and set levers, bars and sag. The first thing I noticed is the bike doesn't do anything weird. The handlebars are relatively neutral and the clutch feels good - like a KTM in fact. Everything feels good like it should.

At 6ft 2ins I'm a pretty tall fella but even then everything was comfortable. The only downsides on the ergonomics were a matter of personal preference. I like quite a low bar and the Husky has that high Euro handlebar feel. The only other thing I really didn't like with the ergos were the grips. It's an easy thing to fix but as my hands would discover they leave a lot to be desired.

# **SUPER-SAVER?**

A warranty is a strange concept for dirt bike riders but it could just be the best thing the BMW group have brought to off-road. BMW's cars and bikes - and Husqvarna's n'all - come with a full warranty programme that covers pretty much everything that isn't wear and tear (so that rules out wheel bearings, chains and sprockets etc)...

All it requires is - and stick with me here the bike to be given to your dealer for the major services as stated in the manual, use original parts for maintenance and - voila - you have a two-year warranty with no mileage limit. So if you do happen to do some serious damage it could just maybe save you a large chunk of cash and effort if you're willing to jump through a few hoops...





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events2



Heading into the first test of the day the thing that surprised me most over the last TE I rode was the improvement with the fuel injection system. The bike ran so clean, it was pulling tall gears easily and felt surprisingly strong. Enduro 250s are not renowned for their arm-ripping, beastly motors and the TE is no different but it was by no means slow. The bike doesn't feel abundant with anything in the engine department. It's not got a ripping top-end - if anything it's a little flat but not outrageously so. The bottom-end doesn't pull hard either but it does work well through the mid-range and it's easy to find grip in the slippery areas - and the Muntjac had some surprisingly slippery going on the test - and when it opened up it pulled my 15 stone along at a rate that it should be proud of.

At no point did it get out of my hands - it never had an aggressive delivery which made it incredibly easy and forgiving to ride, an all-round pleasure. Much like the other 250s it likes to rev and it worked best when you kept it shifting and singing but it was never particularly difficult to do so and when you did need to pull tall gears and have a little finesse it has the bottom-end to fall back on. I mentioned it before but the fuelling genuinely impressed me. The fuel-injection was working well and didn't miss a beat all day something I couldn't say about the last TÉ250 I rode. I was genuinely impressed.

Suspension is a strange area for me - I'm heavier than your average guy and most enduro bikes come too soft. Much to my surprise I was able to comfortably set the sag to my weight but around Thetford Forest it was never going to be stiff enough. The shock suffered miserably at my hands and as the day wore on and the holes got deeper and the edges squarer it got scary.

The set-up wasn't too bad, it was very

'reboundy' but being too soft can't have helped this and by the second lap it was blowing through the stroke on the ever-increasing bumps. Like with most suspension on enduro bikes it would benefit from a little love in the workshop.

In stark contrast the Kayaba forks were pretty damn good considering and never threw any surprises my way. They didn't have the same habit of disappearing through the stroke that the shock seemed keen on and held tall and dealt with the whooped-out course in relative comfort. On the big whoops they could be harsh in the initial part of the stroke but apart from that I didn't really have any complaints. Like all suspension, it could be improved to suit each rider but it was perfectly rideable out of the crate.

The area the TE really came into its own for me was its handling. It's surprisingly easy to throw around all day, tips into corners very easily and holds its line well in rutted corners with little effort. The Muntjac has levels of grip that only sand can bring but even during the shakedown around a wet, slippery MX track the front liked to be pushed and responded well. It tracked well and never wanted to climb out of the ruts. Making little adjustments to your direction or changing lines were a breeze and the bike seems to do exactly what you wanted it to.

All round Husqvarna have a 250F that is competitive and easy to ride. In stock form it's not a world dominating bike - it isn't pushing the limits of power production but it does pretty much everything it should do well. It's easy to ride, which makes it easy to ride fast too and in my opinion that's always a plus. Sure, it's not the perfect bike and if you were serious about racing then you'd make changes but if a 250F is on your radar then the Husky's definitely got to be a serious consideration...



# **SPECIFICATIONS**

Capacity: 249.5cc

Bore and stroke: 79mm x 50.9mm Transmission: Six-speed Fuel tank capacity: 8.5 litres

Front suspension: Kayaba USD 48mm

(300mm travel)

Rear suspension: Sachs

(296mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm disc Rear brake: 240mm disc Seat height: 950mm Wheelbase: 1470mm Ground clearance: 290mm

Kerb weight: 106kg RRP: £6725

THE BARCELONA INDOOR IS ONE OF THE SWEETEST EVENTS ON THE SPANISH OFF-ROAD CALENDAR BUT WHAT MAKES IT SO TASTY?

igh on a hillside overlooking the beautiful coastal city of Barcelona sits the Palau Sant Jordi stadium which translates to St George's Palace if you only speak-a-de English – and, yep, that's the very same dragon-slaying dude whose death we honour each year on April 23. Anyway, the stadium is basically a 12,000-seat relic of the 1992 Olympics that now regularly hosts rock shows, expos and quite possibly hobos but I don't know.

As well as hosting all of the above and much more, for the past 21 years the stadium has been home to the Barcelona Indoor Trial and since the millennium the Barcelona Indoor Enduro n'all. For a good few years these two events co-existed quite happily but with declining spectator numbers at both for the past few editions the pair have been pushed together - like a top-heavy promo girl's most prized possessions - by event promoters RPM Racing to create one monster of an indoor motosicklin' event and one that the siesta-lovin' spectators seem to adore...

The format's kept quite simple so it's not too confusing for the average Jose to follow. The enduro LCQs run first, the X-Trial – that's the hip new name for the Indoor World Trial Championship - semis and finals are next followed by the three Indoor Enduro World Championship finals that are punctuated by a demolition derby for yokel racers and the night race for non-qualifiers. The slick programme keeps the fans on the edge of their 24-Euro seats for three hours or so until at around 9pm when they all head home.

With a crowd of over 10,000 it's obvious that the event is hitting the spot with the Spanish and there's no reason why a similar event wouldn't work in the UK.

Okay, so the cost of importing dirt means that it's impossible for any UK promoter to come close to matching that ticket price but the British SX series has proved it's not impossible to sell out arenas with a slightly higher ticket price provided the show hits the spot. And how could an action-packed endurocross/ indoor trial not wow spectators in a glam location like the O2 Arena?

Of course the O2, LG, MEN or Metro Arenas don't offer anywhere near the same amount of floor space that the Palau Sant Jordi does but that could also work in the event's favour n'all. Personally, I'm not a big fan of seeing dirt bikes ridden on anything other than dirt and so to watch an indoor trial held on a clinically clean surface goes against everything that's ingrained in me. I say let's reinvent indoor trials so they closer resemble what happens outside in the real world.

It definitely wouldn't be impossible for a smart promoter to plot sections over, around or next to the organic-based hazards built for indoor enduros and, who knows, it might even bring some added excitement into the indoor trials game as shifting dirt and changing terrain affect the difficulty of the sections.

And surely seeing Bou and co riding

natural-ish terrain with turns and stuff thrown in would keep the crowd's attention longer than the bunch of all-or-nothing unidirectional big box sections that we see now. I mean, watching five of the six best trials riders in the world fiving a section within the first few metres really doesn't make for great viewing although saying that I've seen 10,000 or so screaming Spaniards who would definitely disagree.

While there are currently no plans to bring a Barcelona-style double-header to the UK - or completely reinvent the sport of indoor trials so it's more to my liking the good news is that flights to Spain are reasonably cheap, the weather in Barcelona is always much better than it is here and there's gonna be another indoor epic next year. Do yourself a favour and make sure you're there...





# THE BOU SHOW!

With this year's X-Trial championship being dominated by Spaniards - and Montesa's Toni Bou in particular - there's plenty for the home crowd to cheer about in Barcelona. Of the six semi-finalists only two aren't home country heroes and those international interlopers - Brit Jack Challoner and Japan's Takahisa Fujinami - are both eliminated before the final begins anyway.

The ensuing four-way scrap between Bou, Adam Raga (Gas Gas), Albert Cabestany (Sherco) and Jeroni Fajardo (Ossa) is dominated by Bou – the only four-stroke rider in the pack - who is definitely head and shoulders above the rest at this point in his career. Five marks clear after the semis Bou drops nothing in the head-to-head races and stays feet up for the rest of the trial to end the night on just four marks lost - and three of them are time penalties!

### RESULT - X-TRIAL

в	1	Toni Bou	Montesa	4
Е	2	Albert Cabestany	Sherco	22
h	3	Adam Raga	Gas Gas	25
ı	4	Jeroni Fajardo	Ossa	35
	5	lack Challener	Poto	10 (aliminated in son

The Palau Sant Jordi is an

# BLAST OFF! KTM'S 2011 FACTORY EN

There's been a whole heap of hoo-ha surrounding KTM's all-new world championship winning 350cc four-stroke motocross bike and now the enduro version – the 350 EXC-F – is set to spread similar ripples through the off-road world. Officially launched to the press in Barcelona, the new bike certainly looks ready to race and with 2009 title winner Johnny Aubert onboard one in this year's Enduro World Championship it could well be a winner in the ultra-competitive E2 division.

Although it looks pretty much the same – except for the lighting kit and kickstart – as the 350 SX-F that Tony Cairoli dominated the 2010 MX1 world championship with, the enduroised 350 is actually a very different beast. The motor features a modified cylinderhead, a heavier and stronger generator, a new crankshaft with more inertia, six instead of five-speed transmission and a clutch unit with an internal damping mechanism and diaphragm spring. With peak performance somewhere above 45hp at 10,000 rpm KTM claim that the 350 EXC-F should be powerful enough to beat any 450 in the E2 class.

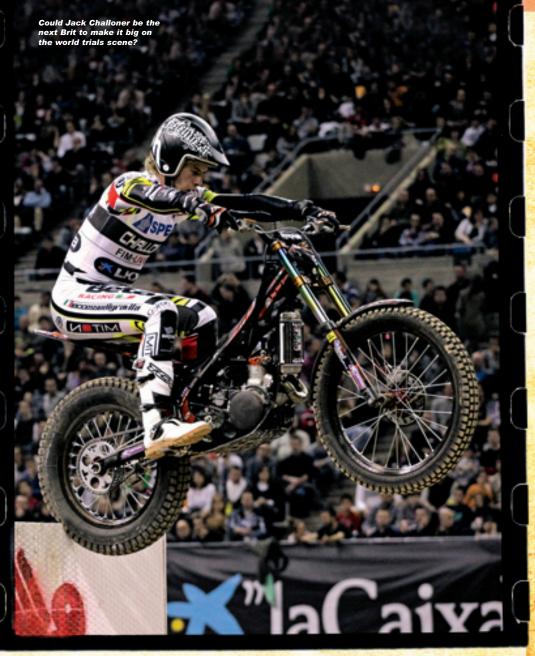
The chassis too is slightly different with the biggest difference between the enduro and motocross bike being the lack of suspension linkage. That's right folks, it seems that the PDS system is still king in enduro racing mostly thanks to

the increased ground clearance and weight savings a linkageless system offers. But while a lot of the emphasis on the 2011 KTM factory enduro team launch is placed on the 350, the real stars of the show are of course the team riders. The six-man team is headed by 30-year-old Frenchman Johnny Aubert. The nephew of motocross grand prix legend Jean-Jacques Bruno, Johnny is already a two-time EWC champion and will be hunting for his third gold medal in 2011. Riding shotgun in the E2 class will be 26-year-old Spaniard Cristobal Guerrero.

David Knight - who shares his birthday with Aubert on May 31 although he's actually a couple of years older - is KTM's great hope in the E3 category where the Manxman will be looking to secure his fourth world championship win on the

Meanwhile, in the E1 class fiery Finlander Eero Remes and Italian stallion Thomas Oldrati will battle it out for supremacy on the Austrian marque's 250 EXC-F. While he's not expected to take in a full tour of duty in the EWC Taddy Blazusiak will be racing selected rounds as well as all the extreme and endurocross events he can muster.





### IF YOU DON'T KNOW JACK THEN DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT - SIMPLY READ ON AND LEARN A LITTLE...

With two world trials titles to his name, 20-year-old Halifax lad Jack Challoner's well on his way to becoming a major player in world trials and if he keeps on keeping on could be the kid to fill King Dougie's shoes. We hooked up with the Beta boy wonder in Barcelona to find out a little more about this future force of the feet-up game...

DBR: You've just turned 20 and you've already got two world, two European and three British titles to your name - are you the next Dougle Lampkin?

JC: "I don't know about that but Dougie is my ultimate inspiration. I grew up watching him so even to be included in the same line-up is a dream come true To achieve what he has achieved is the goal for all trials riders and I'll continue to watch and learn from him and then hopefully stand on that podium as much as he has over the next 10 years."

DBR: You're currently Britain's leading rider in the X-Trial championship. Is it a surprise to you that you're doing so well in your rookie year?

JC: "I knew the step up to the senior level of the championships was going to be a big one but it was only after the Sheffield Arena Trial in January that I really knew I could get a good result in the X-Trial championships. I know I have it in me to do well at this level and I know that my best results could have been better so I will continue to push all the limits.

DBR: Can you carry this form over into the outdoor season?

JC: "The outdoor world championships will be another big step up for me as it's completely different from the indoor championships. I have been relentlessly practising the biggest and hardest sections I can find to give myself the best chance to continue this good form.

DBR: What are your overall thoughts on the Barcelona event?

JC: "Barcelona is brilliant, the organisers do a cracking job and the crowd there is always very large and very noisy. I can remember a couple of years ago I went to watch and there was no enduro so the trials sections were much bigger and I think that possibly made it more entertaining for the general punters. But I think having the enduro there is a good thing too as it gives the night more dimension and introduces different audiences to the different disciplines."

DBR: Do you think a similar type of event could work in

JC: "I'm sure it's something that a lot of the British riders would want to compete in. Both enduro and trials are very spectacular and I'm sure it would attract a massive crowd too. It would be great for such an event to exist at the O2 in London."

DBR: Finally, what does it feel like to wear a Lycra one-piece in front of 12,000 cheering fans? JC: "Ha ha! I used to say that I'd never wear a one-piece but now I prefer to ride in one all the time because they allow you more movement and more flexibility - every inch counts in trials!"

# **FLAT OUT!**

### TADDY'S THE DADDY IN FULL-BORE ENDURO WAR...

While the X-Trial is all about the local heroes it's a very different story in enduroland where fan fave Ivan Cervantes fails to make the points-payers in his debut ride on the locally produced Gas Gas and all the other Spaniards manage to miss the podium n'all - d'oh! But that doesn't stop the fans from getting right into it and - as with all indoor enduros - there's plenty to get right into.

Manxman David Knight is fastest in quali on the all-new KTM 350 EXC-F but extreme enduro sensation Taddy Blazusiak is right on the pace with him and although the KTM crew are hoping to launch their new baby with a win the word in the pits is that Knighter's to let the Polish prince take the all-important championship points - not that these two traditionally take team orders to heart, eh Taddy?

Whether Knighter lets him have it or not - I personally don't think he has much choice in the matter - the end result is that Blazusiak takes top honours in all three finals to not only dominate proceedings and take maximum points on the night but inadvertently wrap up the shortened two-round world championship as well. Knighter runs 2-3-2 to take a well-deserved second overall and give KTM's new 350 some credibility - not that it really needs it - while Swedish young gun Joakim Ljunggren takes the final podium spot on Husaberg's new 300cc two-stroke with a 3-2-5 scorecard.

Alfredo Gomez is first of the homeboys in fourth while Brits Graham Jarvis, Dougie Lampkin and Jonny Walker finish fifth, eighth and ninth Dougle dogged by a migraine and some serious bad luck thwarting Walker's attempts.

After finishing fifth in the first final the young Cumbrian miraculously leads the middle leg after starting on the second row until Knighter wipes him out on the finishline log section. Returning for race three the KORR teamster follows Lampkin across the line in 10th for that impressive ninth overall in only his second ever indoor race.

### RESULTS - INDOOR ENDURO

Taddy Blazusiak KTM 20+20+20=60 2 David Knight 17+14+17=48 KTM 14+17+10=41 Joakim Ljunggren Husaberg Alfredo Gomez Husaberg 11+10+14=35 Graham Jarvis Husaberg 9+11+8=28 Dougie Lampkin Gas Gas 5+7+6=18 10+1+5=16 Jonny Walker KTM





# BULLFIGHTERS

TOP TRACKS, TOP RIDERS AND TOP RACING - THE 2011 RED BULL PRO NATIONALS PROMISE TO PROVIDE A BAR-BANGIN' BANQUET FOR THE MX HUNGRY POPULATION...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Ian Roxburgh/Events22

to see top-flight motocross in this country your choices were limited to the ACU national series, a handful of big one-off races (including, on occasions, the odd British GP) and, well, that was yer lot! For a country that invented the sport opportunities to watch top pros bangin' bars were few and far between - maybe measuring a meagre 10 weekends a year. Well not anymore...

Now entering its third year, Events22's Red Bull Pro Nationals has quickly established itself as a forward-thinking series that's attracting a growing audience through a mix of great racing, great tracks and a great publicity machine that's actively reaching out to take motocross to the mainstream.

One of the RBPN's unique selling points is its family-orientated festival atmosphere spread over a weekend where it shares the billing with two other high-profile series – the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup and Fuchs Silkolene two-stroke championship. And in between the on-track action visitors are treated to FMX displays as well as actively encouraged to try their hands at off-road riding through a

nce upon a time if you wanted dedicated Try-Out area. Last year 2,000 first-timers had a go and this year Events22 is hoping to boost this by a further 50 per cent.

But while presenting MX to the masses in the best possible light is a worthy, worthwhile mission, let's not forget that this is a race series. So as important as introducing fresh fans to the sport undoubtedly is, for the purpose of this preview what we want to know is who's going to actually win the bloody thing?

On paper at least there aren't any easy answers with a tantalising combination of seasoned experience, youthful exuberance, some seriously quick wildcards and a spot of closed-season shuffling ensuring that the RBPN series is going to kick off in 2011 looking very different to how it ended 2010...

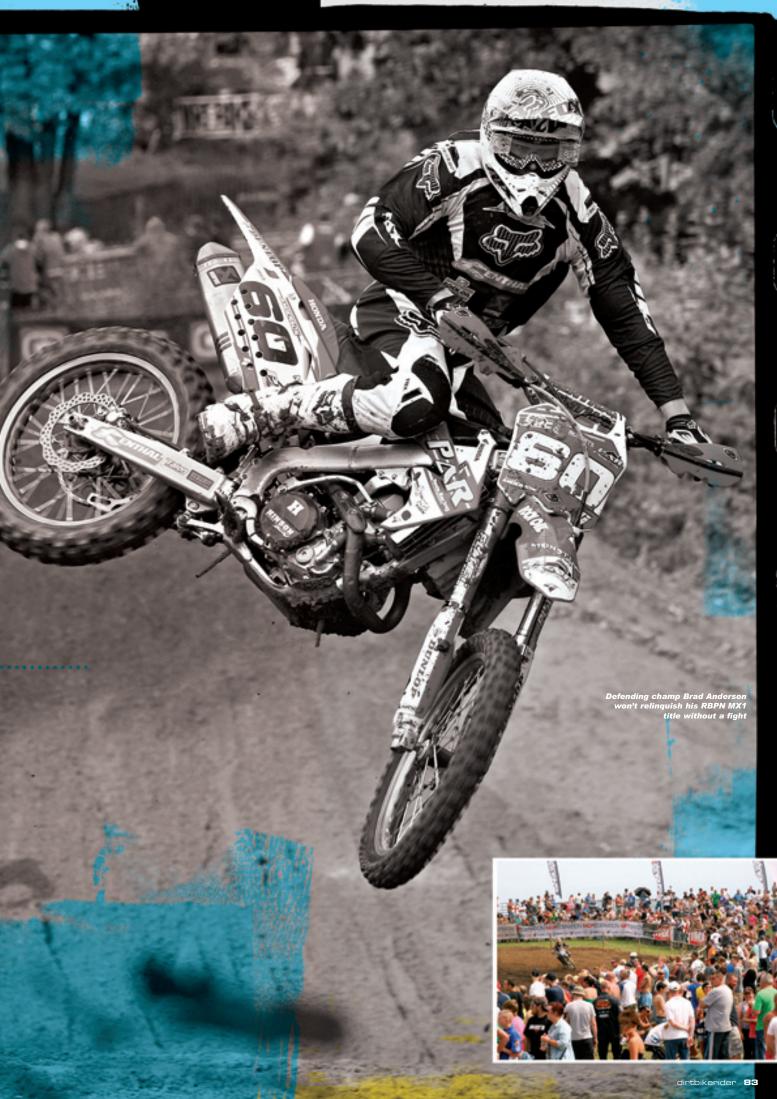
Making an appearance as a wildcard rider at the opening round at FatCat Motorparc, LS Motors Honda's Shaun Simpson will be a tough man to beat. Based in Belgium for his assault on the 2011 world championship, Woody loves the soft stuff and the South Yorkshire track is every bit as sandy the iconic Lommel circuit that's just down the road from the 23-year-old Scotsman's new pad. But Shaun isn't doing the full series so isn't a true contender...

And besides, Shaun's not the only MX1 rider capable of winning at the opening round. How about the Buildbase CCM two-man team of Stephen Sword and Tom Church? Both riders can win indoors and out and with another year of development behind the Clews' Cement Mixer, Swordy and TC are packing some serious firepower.

It's impossible to speculate on the MX1 silverware without mentioning defending champ Brad Anderson who's sticking with PAR Honda for another season. As well as lifting the 2010 crown by a mile from James Noble and Carl Nunn who've both retired from racing, Ando put in a storming performance in Colorado at the MXdN to prove he can bang bars with the very best

Last year PAR doubled up in the RBPN with Irishman Martin Barr lifting the MX2 title. Well Marty's thrown a spanner into the works by signing up with Proppa.com KTM, relinquishing his crown and moving up to the MX1 class where he'll take on his former team-mate aboard a 350SX-F alongside Nez Parker.

On the subject of 350-riding



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Irishmen, when his GP commitments don't take him away expect to see Graeme Irwin gripping it, ripping it and quite possibly flipping it as well as he does his bit for Roger Magee's HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK outfit. The teenaged tearaway has one of the most all-action styles you'll ever see which makes for some great entertainment.

At the other end of the Irish spectrum there's Gordon Crockard. A decade ago he was winning GPs and the Crock Star still has the pace needed to win races as well as the smarts to take titles. After a few unsettled years of switching between bikes he's starting the 2011 campaign riding for the Ireland-based Relentless Suzuki by TAS team and looking forward to showing that there's still life in the old dog.

Other podium threats include Jamie Law, Alex Snow and Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki's Gert Krestinov and there's also new Samsung Yamaha signing Kristian Whatley. The son of former British champion Jeremy Whatley, Kristian's an unknown

quantity in his debut season in MX1. Dripping with natural talent and the ability to pick the very best racing lines, the 21-year-old has the capacity to thrill and frustrate in equal measure but if team owner Roy Emberson can get the best out of him he could be the surprise package of the class in 2011.

With no defending champion in the MX2 class the title chase has been thrown wide open - although, to be fair, even if Martin Barr was staying put he'd have his work cut out to retain his crown.

Looking down the list of riders no-one springs out as a definite champion. On his 2010 form you'd have to go for HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK's Jake Nicholls but The Reverend's committed to GPs so he won't contest the full RBPN series.

Nev Bradshaw won the MX2 title in its inaugural year but didn't figure in the 2010 championship hunt. Newly signed to MVR-D Honda, could this be the year he regains his crown? Not if last year's vice-champ





## RACES IN PLACES

THE WHEN AND WHERE OF THE RB

### ROUND 1 – FATCAT MOTOPARC, APRIL 2-3

Deep sand and an all-new track awaits riders at the opening round of the series staged at Martin Cravendale's off-road Utopia just off Junction 4 of the M18

**HOW TO GET THERE...**Er, just off Junction 4 of the M18. Postcode DN3 3EH

### ROUND 2 - LANDRAKE MOTO PARC, MAY 7-8

Fast and flowing with some technical jump sections, Landrake is deep in the South West of England, just over the border into Cornwall. It's a bit of a trek but well worth it.

### HOW TO GET THERE...

The majority of the population need to take the M5 south to the end, then join the A38. LMP is just across the Tamar Bridge past Plymouth. Postcode PL12 5EP

### ROUND 3 – SKELDER BANK, JUNE 11-12

Quite possibly the most picturesque circuit in the UK, the Skelder Bank track overlooks the seaside town of Whitby where Dracula is reckoned to have first come ashore in England. Lots of big jumps and a technical rhythm section get the blood pumping and make for great racing.

### HOW TO GET THERE...

Enter Whitby along the main drag from either north or south, then take the A171 towards Guisborough and look for the signs. Postcode YO21 1TN

### ROUND 4 - CANADA HEIGHTS, JULY 30-31

The famous Kentish track needs no introduction for MX fans. Depending on the weather it can either be sandy heaven or muddy hell but no matter what Mother Nature throws at the circuit it's always a big physical challenge

### HOW TO GET THERE...

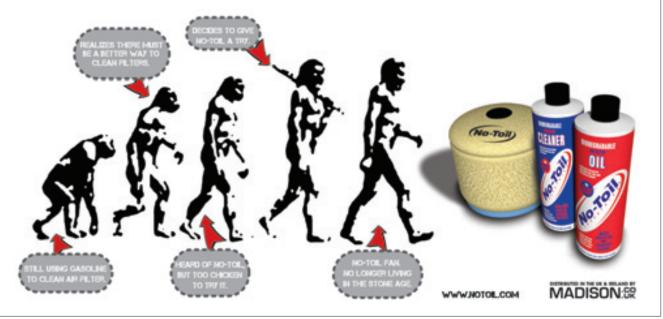
Leave the M25 at Junction 3 or the M20 at Junction 1 and follow the signs for Brands Hatch. Go straight over the small roundabout and then left onto Button Street. Postcode is BR8 8DX





# Are YOU still living... in the Stone Age?







### ROUND 5 – HAWKSTONE PARK, AUGUST 27-28

Quite possibly the godfather of British MX tracks, historic Hawkstone Park is a super-tough sand track with an iconic hill and the ability to sort the men from the boys.

### HOW TO GET THERE...

About 12 miles north of Shrewsbury, you can hit Hawkstone from either the A49 or A53. Postcode is SY4 4NA

### ROUND 6 – PORTER'S PIT, SEPTEMBER 3-4

Whataboutye? Northern Ireland's premier MX track, the Desertmartin circuit is another sandy test of man and machine with lots of jumps and elevation changes and featuring a whole new back section since it was last used for top-flight motocross.

### HOW TO GET THERE...

Either grab a cheap flight from Ryan Air or Easyjet to Belfast International or ferry it across from ports including Holyhead, Liverpool, Stranraer or Troon. Desertmartin's on the far side of Lough Neagh. Get on the B40 to Draperstown and you won't go far wrong. Postcode is BT45 5QW

### ROUND 7 - TBA, SEPTEMBER 24-25

Keep your eyes and ears open for news of the venue for the final round...

Skelder Bank has got to be one of the most picturesque tracks in the country



Proven race winner Ray Rowson moves down to MX2 this season with Embo's Samsung Yamaha team. The Shropshire speedster's pedigree on a 450F has never been in doubt but there's a question mark over how well he's suited to a 250F.

There seems to be a perennial question mark over Lanes Kawasaki's Scott Elderfield who's also lining up in the MX2 division. On his day Scott's as fast as anyone in the country but his days can be few and far between and sometimes he leaves you with the impression that his heart's just not in it.

In a class packed with up-and-comers experience could be key and that's something

new Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki signing Bryan MacKenzie's certainly got along with Mel Pocock who's newly hooked up to the Relentless Suzuki by TAS team. And TM UK/Electraction rider Stuart Edmonds has also been around the block a few times and his added familiarity with the blue Italian machine could be an advantage given many of his rivals' fresh deals for 2011.

TAPECE

Among the hungry young riders looking to make a breakthrough at adult level are Josh Waterman, Luke Hawkins and Kayne Lamont. Moto One KTM's Waterman is keen to build on a super-successful schoolboy career and PAR Honda's Hawkins showed his class last season in the European championship. Kiwi Lamont, over here racing for the Hooper Maxxis Suzuki team, is seriously swift and aiming to make his presence felt in Europe.

For more info on the series point your PC towards www.redbullpronationals.com



### THE DADDY OF 'EM ALL!

### DON'T MISS...HAWKSTONE PARK

Every year the organisers of the Red Bull Pro Nationals like to lay on one stand-out event - a flagship meeting for the series – and this year's will be round five at the world famous Hawkstone Park on August 27-28.

Run the weekend after the British Grand Prix, the

Hawkstone event will also be the second round of the new International Red Bull Pro National series that will kick off in Holland earlier in the year. To accommodate an expected influx of top European and American riders the classes will be split for the only time this season with separate motos for MX1 and MX2.





### DRAGACT!

IS A DODGY BACK BRAKE COSTING YOU A FORTUNE IN WORN OUT BRAKE PADS? OUR RESIDENT TECHNICAL TRANNIE TAKES US THROUGH SOME POSSIBLE CAUSES LIKE SOME SORTA SPANNER-SPINNING, SAUSAGE-SHIFTIN' SHIRLEY BASSEY...

y mate Marcus blows through back brake pads way quicker than anybody else on this planet which for him makes motocross an even more expensive hobby than it needs to be. There are several reasons why rear pads would wear out prematurely which I'm gonna go over right now so you'll know what to do if you start hitting similar problems.

The rear brake system isn't particularly complicated but there are quite a few moving parts involved which can wear or get clogged up with dirt and when either – or both – of those things occur that's normally the cause of the problem. Poor brake pedal adjustment can also cause issues as can a rider with a heavy right boot – great for driving your car fast but not so good for elongating the life of your rear brake pads. Let's start with the basics and work forward from there...

Put the bike on a stand so the rear wheel is off the ground. In a perfect world the rear brake will be dragging like a Friday afternoon in the office and the problem will be an easy one to spot but unfortunately that's rarely the way things go.

To ensure the problem's a technical one and not an easily-fixable rider related one, fit the fully kitted rider to the bike and ask him run through his normal riding positions — everything bar braking. As he does his moves check that the rear wheel continues to spin freely throughout. It might sound like a dumb thing to check but if your rider is resting his foot on the brake or applying it inadvertently then that could well be your problem right there. Assuming that the rider is not causing the problem return them to their box until the next time you need gripping and ripping.

Next up clean the brake piston as well as you can and then push the rear pads apart. If everything is working properly the piston should push back into the calliper nice and smoothly offering a little resistance as the fluid is pushed back through the system.

Now remove the brake pad holding pin and visually check it for wear. Quite often the pads will wear little grooves in the pin which can be enough to hold them in the brake on position and make your rear brake drag. If it is showing any signs of wear I'd recommend replacing it because Race FX dealers can supply one that costs around £2.50 – at that price it's almost worth replacing this pin every time you do a pad change. Pop out the pads and check that there's nothing that could be causing problems – a build up of dirt, small stones, obvious damage etc – and give

everything a good clean while you're in there.

With the pads out check that the calliper is able to run smoothly side to side on its two sealed pins. If it's not running smoothly whip out the rear wheel and pull the calliper off the pins so you can check they're not worn, scored or dirty. If they're any of the above then either clean or replace them remembering to lube them up with quality grease during the rebuild process.

Because of the nature of the problem we're dealing with here we'll be replacing the brake pads. Clean and then fit the old heat shields to the new pads, pop the pads into the calliper and then refit the brake pad pin making sure it's tightened to the correct torque – check your manual for that setting. Pop in your rear wheel, tighten that to the specified torque then pump up the rear brake pedal before you forget.

If you've checked everything diligently, cleaned and fitted everything properly then chances are you'll have sorted the problem even if it is inadvertently. But before we give ourselves high-fives all round we're gonna take a look at the pedal and pivot assembly too.

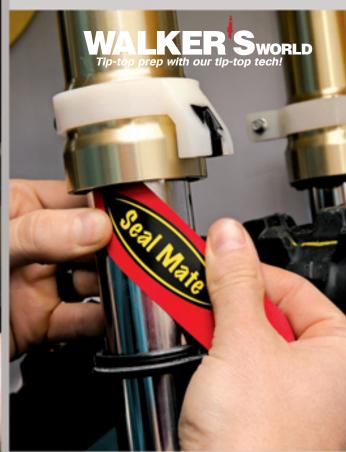
Sitting so low to the ground this part of your bike takes a lot of abuse and is constantly hammered by rocks, roost and if you race UK supercross then quite possibly Ashley Greedy's front wheel. It's all quite simple but there are two pivot points that can cause problems of the stickyness variety. Start by taking out the large Allen bolt that acts as the main pivot for the brake pedal. Give it a good clean, check for damage or wear and if it's all good give the bolt a good greasing and pop it back in there. I'd advise you to do this pretty much every week as part of your pre-ride maintenance.

The second pivot point links the pedal to the master cylinder. Normally it's held on by a clip or split pin so is easy to remove, clean and grease. Unless your bike is a million years old and you regularly ride it in the sea I don't think it'll cause you any problems but it's well worth checking, cleaning and greasing anyway, right?

One last thing to consider is the brake fluid. If it's got super-hot or even boiled through being dragged the chances are that its performance is seriously impaired so it's worth replacing the lot. This will require you bleeding the system which really isn't too difficult when done properly.

Tune in next month and I'll cover that process in my five-minute fix...





### WALKER'SFIVE-MINUTE FIX!

### A TEMPORARY FIX FOR WEEPING FORK SEALS...

Okay, so you've got to the track and one of your fork seals has decided to spring a leak on the way there so what do you do? Before you pack up and head home cursing the fact you need new fork seals you need to know that the chances are that it's just a little bit of trapped dirt causing the wee weep down your leg - I mean a small weep obviously and not a wee weep because that would tell me you've got a whole heap of other problems going on in your life that I don't wanna get into right now.

Anyway, weeping seals are the #1 cause of premature seal replacement because people all too often confuse a small weep with a blown seal - there's a joke in there somewhere involving Eskimos, skidoos and a frosty moustache or something - and send their forks off for costly repairs. But before you get out the cardboard boxes and packing tape and post off your front boingers to your suspension tuner of choice I want you to try something that'll cost you no more than a fiver and around five minutes of your time.

This little fella is called a Motion Pro Seal Mate and it's available from a Madison (www.madison.co.uk) dealer near you now. It's a cheap little tool that is designed to remove any dirt that's trapped underneath your fork seal causing it to weep. Basically, it's a very thin piece of bendable plastic with a hooked end that you can slide between your fork leg and oil seal to pull out any debris that's causing seepage. It's a handy thing to keep in your toolbox and it might just be a life saver one day.

Before you get going on this one I want you to clean all around the dust seal on your forks. Then use a small screwdriver to slide away the dust seal which will expose the oil seal. If the oil seal has a spring around it roll it down the leg away from the seal.

Clean the area around the oil seal using contact cleaner and an unused toothbrush followed by a soft towel. When it's clean enough to eat your dinner off I want you to go and grab some racing grease and a little fork oil. Mix a tiny amount of fork oil and grease together then smear the concoction onto the fork leg and around the seal to help lubricate things nice and slippery like.

Now grab your Seal Mate and insert the hooked end between the seal and the fork leg. Rotate the Seal Mate around the fork leg making sure that the hooked end is the leading edge. After one full rotation – or more if you're feeling fruity – start to pull your Seal Mate out but continue rotating it around the fork leg as you do so.

If you took a spring off the seal roll that back on right now, clean the fork leg again and then compress the front suspension several times - go on give it a good bounce. Now check for oil leaks. If it's all good then give yourself a pat on the back, pop the dust seal on and go get geared up.

If it's still leaking, lube it up again and work the Seal Mate in there some more. I reckon that the majority of the time a little Seal Mate session should sort you out but if it doesn't and your seals really are fecked then you know what you need to do.

### LARRY'S GAME

ENERATION OF NORTHERN IRISH GP RACERS,

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

orthern Ireland enjoys a rich heritage in motorcycle road racing, fuelled by such iconic events as the Ulster Grand Prix and North West 200. But it's only in the last 30 years that the Irish have penetrated world motocross and the ground-breaking stalwart who paved the province's way to international renown recently turned 50, providing an admirable excuse for Ulster's off-road fraternity to celebrate in style at McBride's Bar in Comber!

Laurence Spence spent nine seasons on the 500GP trail during the 1980s, his best being the 1984 campaign when he finished joint sixth in the world championship and apart from newly-crowned triple champion Andre Malherbe was the only rider to score points in

Born January 18 1961 in Londonderry, Laurence was inevitably immersed in motorcycle sport because his father Raymond 'Hooky' Spence - was a bluff, expansive Irish racer who competed in both road races and motocross. This ebullient Ulsterman also raced speedway, grass-tracked sidecars, played ice hockey and blew the saxophone in a dance band. Ray modified a Honda monkey bike for his young son to mess around with in local fields before the family moved to Belfast and built (quite literally!) a filling station that incorporated a motorcycle shop.

Ulster schoolboy MX was emerging in 1972 and a 175cc twin-cylinder Yamaha road bike lay neglected in the garage. "Dad said I could have it to race if I put in an 18 inch back wheel," smiles Spence. "It didn't handle too well with three inches of movement back and front but it was the fastest bike on

A TM Suzuki followed but Ray was still busy racing motocross himself. "Ma used to take me to schoolboy meetings. I raced grasstrack and motocross because they still ran them together in Ireland. It teaches you how to start and go round corners quick!"

He practised incessantly, seven nights a week. "I'd go out every evening with two

half-gallon cans of petrol slung over the bars and ride until they ran out!" Laurence won youth grasstrack and motocross titles before moving into adult competition on a KX420 Kawasaki in 1977, winning the Irish championship straight off after changing mid-season to a 250 EMC and working with his dad during school holidays.

Spence rode the 1978 Trophee des Nations at Kester in Belgium under age. "I drove Robert Wilkinson's van the whole way and back without a licence. Never been abroad in

He entered grands prix the following year, he and his father tramping the continent in a rough old Transit van. Laurence, racing a Cotton EMX, nailed an eighth at Farleigh Castle and finished 10th at Payerne in Switzerland. That was the weekend I joined them in the van for an overnight charge back to Calais - bike, sweaty gear and Laurence asleep in a congealed heap in the back and Raymond keeping himself awake with blistering black coffee. They were a typical father and son outfit. "We never got on at all," laughs Laurence. "We'd go for a couple of days not speaking!"



DIRT



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He scored further points at Namur and Luxembourg's final round to secure 19th in the table. "I used to learn by following such as Graham Noyce and watching their lines during practice.'

A Yamaha ride in 1980 yielded ninth and seventh places in Canada, a sparkling sixth at Gaildorf and more points in the final round at Luxembourg where Ettelbruck's tricky grass cambers suited Laurence's smooth, effortless riding style. He stayed with Yamaha for 1981 on a machine supplied by Mitsui with Austria and Namur highlights of another 16th place finish in the 500GPs, two points behind David Thorpe's Kawasaki. But 1982 started badly with two months wasted at the Wilcomoto factory in Hereford before realising that the home-brewed bike was too slow and heavy.

Only three weeks remained until the first grand prix when Laurence was rescued by Maico importer Badger Goss and distinguished Irish dealer Norman Watt. A beefy 13 stone, the imperturbable Irishman suffered his first serious injury in the Finnish GP at Ruskeasanta when he crashed heavily and bust his shoulder. He returned for the last three rounds, stormed to sixth in the first moto at Luxembourg and finished a sensational fourth in the second, both times fending off Honda-mounted American Gary Semics!

He began 1983 without Ray but still with Maico. The van broke down in Germany. "I was towed all the way back to Slough by Willie Simpson on a three-foot rope at 90 miles an hour!" Then Maico went bust.

Snapped up by Alec Wright for an injury-stricken Team Green, he now had a factory mechanic but suffered gearbox problems on an old ex-Thorpe air-cooled KX500. Yet points in his Finnish debut, Italy and France preceded a memorable afternoon at Farleigh Castle. Flu during the week didn't deter the burly Irishman who got embroiled in a sizzling contest for second with the full-blooded factory hardware of Suzuki's Harry Everts and Honda trio Noyce, Thorpe and Malherbe.

High-revving ex-125 champ Harry managed to fend off low-revving Larry's lengthy attack but the latter had Malherbe on the ragged edge until fading to fourth, still ahead of Thorpe and Noyce. "I couldn't breathe for the last 10 minutes," said Spence after his customary post-race nap. "I should have passed Harry, though. He was holding me up, so he was!"
In race two Spence fought from eighth place

into fourth, once more challenging Everts until gearbox gremlins struck again. Stuck with only first and top gears, Laurence laboured through the final laps until - rounding the last bend his abused engine seized solid. Watched by 25,000 spellbound spectators, he somehow manhandled the dead weight a final 60 feet, losing 40 seconds and five places before collapsing into Alec Wright's willing arms to a roar from the crowd. How had he done it? "We call it the 'Spence Grunt'," grinned chain-smoking spannerman Keith Frost. "He inherited it from his grandmother!"

Another strong performance in Namur helped seal Spence a proper Kawasaki berth alongside Georges Jobe for 1984. And what a year! Sixth overall at the opening round in Austria, the phlegmatic Ulsterman never finished a single race outside the top 12, his best days in Canada and back at Namur where he tied for fourth overall with Jukka Sintonen (Honda). He and the smiling Finn finished the season joint sixth in the series and 1985 started out in similar vein, Laurence scoring good points in all eight opening GP motos - including a fourth in France - before a cracked sternum suffered at the rescheduled Patchquick Trophy abruptly ended his campaign.

The following season Spence was offered



FARLEGGY CASTLE 1985: DANK VON VELTHEVEN (46) MEAKS PAST

terms by KTM importer Gordon Jones and top six finishes in Austria and Germany helped him to 12th in the world before the Austrian factory also struck financial difficulties. "This trait seemed to follow my career," reckons Spence. "EMC, Wilcomoto, Maico and KTM all went under when I was with them!"

STACKEN SPENCE, 25000 FAM TRANSFINED

Alec Wright stepped in again but a nasty accident at the second round in France left Spence with a broken arm when, after setting a terrific qualifying time, he sailed over the finishing line jump and collided with a rider coming the opposite way practising starts! He returned to mount his

first - and last - GP rostrum, third overall alongside Jobe and Kurt Nicoll at Farleigh Castle. "But I still knew that Sunday night I was going to quit." He ended up a familiar 19th in the world rankings - just where he'd started out nine years earlier.

Disillusioned by injuries and idiots, the sport's most laidback grand prix rider retired at the tender age of 26 to ride local Ulster races and open his own motorcycle repair shop. But Laurence Spence had paved the way for the province's youth to realise that they too could compete with the best and his legacy lives on to this day.

## HAPPY DAYS!

AT THE BACK END OF 2010 CHAD REED DECIDED HE WANTED OUT OF HIS MONSTER KAWASAKI DEAL AND AFTER JUMPING SHIP AND SETTING UP ON HIS OWN HE'S GRINNING — AND WINNING — AGAIN...

acers are prima donnas. They live life as if they are the only thing that matters. They want their money, their bike, their water, their gear, their time to test and train. They create a world that quite literally revolves around them. But the thing is, they have to in order to win. It takes a seriously selfish dedication to your craft to win at the top level of anything and maybe more so with professional motocross and supercross because it is so involved and so specialised.

So, when you raise your child to be nice, to share, to play well with others etc you're not raising a top-notch motocross racer. You're raising a good citizen instead.

But for Chad Reed, now that he has made a lot of money and had a lot of success, it's not just about what he can gain in a material sense anymore. It's about fun. It's about the love of the sport. And it's still about winning...

Chad came to the USA racing for Yamaha on their new YZ250F and he spent seven years racing the blue machines but things went sour in the middle of a championship run in 2008. In Detroit, Reed's YZ450F

coughed on a tricky on/off section and he went over the bars violently. That was the last straw and Reed's contract negotiations quickly took on a new theme.

contract negotiations quickly took on a new theme.

"I was happy at Yamaha," says Reed. "I got on really well with Keith McCarty and Bob Starr – you know, upper management. My relationship with Yamaha was probably better than it had ever been." But Reed had signed with Larry Brooks' L&M Racing team in part because Brooks promised to rid the bike of this dreaded 'bog'. After he nearly ended his championship in Detroit, Reed had a new condition to his proposed 2009 contract with L&M.

"I felt that nothing could fix the Yamaha at that point," Reed remembers. "And that wasn't that I hated it or didn't like it, it was just a reality. It was dangerous. It had hurt me a couple of times and it almost cost me a championship in 2008. So I really wanted Larry to consider moving to a different brand."

That wasn't going to happen and before the 2008 supercross championship was even over Brooks had stopped by James Stewart's house in Corona and offered him Reed's ride.



He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene... Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing.

Steve Cox is a Glock-packin', raccoon-shootin', gung-ho American MX journo – trinsk Hunter S Thompson with a moto-habit – who follows the entire AWA SXMX tour. Since moving on from defunct US weekly



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Reed rode for Suzuki in 2009, nearly winning the championship indoors against Stewart although Stewart took the win racing for Reed's old team. Then Reed decided to race outdoors – even though he wasn't contracted to do so – and won the outdoor championship for the first time in his career.

Second place in the 450cc SX championship and first place outdoors should solidify a contract extension, shouldn't it? Not for Reed who was faced with a pay cut for 2010 if he stayed with Suzuki and he wasn't prepared to take the pay cut. So in stepped Monster Energy.

Monster wanted Reed but Kawasaki didn't.

Monster wanted Reed but Kawasaki didn't. Monster signed Reed and placed him on the Kawasaki team and things never really meshed. Reed had the worst season he'd ever had as a professional and at the end of the season, even though he had an option for a second year on his contract, he opted out.

"I felt that it was in my best interest and in their best interest that we parted ways," Reed explains. "And it was 100 per cent influenced by me. I asked to be released. I was begging them. "Keep your money, I want out." And I called my agent and told him I wanted out and to make it happen and I think

he thought I was crazy. I think he questioned everything about me. 'Dude, you have another year on your deal and it's a lot of money...' But I told him I wanted out and he took care of it for me."

Since he was out of his contract he could do what he wanted. "I was out of a contract so I was free to ride all the bikes. I had rode them all. And I actually personally went out and purchased a Honda 450 and just loved it. I was having a blast on it. And riding was fun again. I had had two or three months off the bike and it was just fun. I was having so much fun riding and then I decided last-minute to race that race in Australia [the first round of the Australasian SX series].

"I get a bit of a kick out of going there and doing it, like, the way I did. I mean, I literally tested for half-a-day with Bones at Pro Circuit. I purchased all of the A kit suspension and engine stuff that I felt I needed at Pro Circuit. They gave me a pipe and silencer that I think Kevin [Windham] was running and then I spent half the day with Bones and then off I went to Australia."

He went to Australia and dominated the event. "It really

honestly got that drive going again, that fire burning. And the fact that I just had so much fun. I mean, winning is always fun but in my hometown and just riding a motorcycle that I felt comfortable on..."

So Chad decided he wanted to race in 2011

So Chad decided he wanted to race in 2011 regardless of the money – which was a good job considering there wasn't any...
Reed started putting the team together. Backing

Reed started putting the team together. Backing from Bel-Ray is a massive help as are his many other sponsors but the reality is that he's still short of actually paying his bills. He's losing money on his team right now. And that's okay with Chad...

"Mitch [Payton of Pro Circuit] supported it," Reed

"Mitch [Payton of Pro Circuit] supported it," Reed says. "We talked and I really felt that if there was anyone in this industry that could give me a motorcycle at a production level and at a low-cost level that was competitive it was Mitch Payton. And PC was basically Mitch and his team and then Bones and his team and the suspension department. I just felt that those guys allowed me







6 March Little Silver, Exeter MX1 / MX2 / Vets

Round 2

27 March Canada Heights, Kent MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

Round 3

17 April Lyng, Norton MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

Round 4

May Milton Park, Northants MX1/MX2/MXY2

**Round 5** 

26 June Desertmartin, N. fre MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

Round 6

Round 7

14 August Duns, Scotland MX1 / MX2 / MXY2

Round 8

2 October Hawkstone Park MX1 / MX2 / Vets

# DON'T MISS IT!

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Regardless of the money, Reed didn't expect to go out and get his ass kicked. "I didn't come back to racing because my ego is too big to walk away at this point," Reed explains. "I mean, I came back because I felt that the fire wasn't out and that I needed to give it another try. You know, when I had all of those commitments and I had that confidence and that belief in the fact that I could have an amazing motorcycle in a production Honda and then Mitch could do his thing to it and then with

Bel-Ray's commitment we were ready to go. "So, from then it was a matter of talking to the Fox and Shift guys, working at that deal and whether I'm going to be Fox, whether I'm going to be Shift – as it works out I'm Shift and the Fox helmet, Fox goggles. I've kept my A-star deal. I believe I actually had an extra one more year left on my deal but I'm a lifer there. I'm so happy with those guys. It was my first-ever sponsor as a kid and I hope that I'll never leave..."

he's battling for wins now. "I mean, I have just an amazing group of people and it's fun," Reed grins. "It's not a team that I believe is out there to put it to the factory teams in the fact that we can do it bigger and better or whatever. I just think that it's a team that is appreciative of the freedom of what this team creates. We're stoked and happy to have support from Mitch and Bel-Ray and even the Honda guys are really being supportive of us and helping us.

"I think the fact that I hired one of their employees [his mechanic, Lars] that had been there for 10 plus years, I think they have a lot of respect for him and I think that he's the reason why I get some love from Honda. I think they trust him in the fact that anything that they do help us with it's not going to be shared with the wrong people, you know? So, I think they're respectful to our sponsors and to our people that support us. And so far we're succeeding and I think we're moving forward and we're getting better."

### SMART**STUFF**

FITNESS FIRST.

One thing that you get with a smart veteran like Reed is that when starting this team he was able to compartmentalise what he could and couldn't control in such a short period of time before Anaheim 1.

"I just focused on doing what I had to do and I felt that coming into this season I needed to focus on being in shape," Reed says. "I felt that I wanted to take that next step. I wanted to be stronger and fitter and I really feel like my race pace and my race fitness and my endurance are better this year. I feel stronger in areas that I've been weak in in years past."

But this was a calculated choice. He knew he

But this was a calculated choice. He knew he couldn't get in shape easily once the season started but he could find better bike settings after the start of the season.

"I knew if I was fit going into Anaheim, Sunday morning I could have a conversation with the team and with Bones and with Mitch and be like 'hey, the bike needs to be better here, here and here, we're good here, here and here – let's make a plan to move forward to make that better'. I felt that that was more doable and much more realistic than me showing up at Anaheim and being 'man, I can't run 20 laps, I'm going to go and bust my ass this week and try and get fit'."

As his bike settings have come along, Reed has

As his bike settings have come along, Reed has become more comfortable. And with comfort has come speed.

"Chad Reed is a guy you have to worry about if he finds speed and he can find speed..." said Ryan Villopoto after the Atlanta Supercross where Reed battled with James Stewart until the final lap. "Now, we all have to worry about him..."

But more than anything, with riders like Chad Reed — and even Kevin Windham — the biggest thing that makes them fast is happiness. And Chad Reed is happy right now controlling his own destiny and doing his own thing...



## SXAPPEALI

TIGHT TRACKS, BIG EGOS AND SOME SERIOUSLY BAD BLOOD

MAKE FOR NON-STOP ACTION AS THIS YEAR'S SUPERCROSS

CHAMPIONSHIP CRASHES TOWARDS THE MIDWAY MARK...

fter four rounds of racing in the 2011 Monster Energy/AMA Supercross Championship two riders had risen to the top with Monster Energy Kawasaki's Ryan Villopoto and San Manuel Yamaha's James Stewart each winning

two rounds.

However, as things move forward, consistency becomes the exception rather than the rule for the top

guns in the championship.

With so much time off the bike prior to the 2011 season it's understandable that Stewart needed to get some races under his belt before he really started to shine.

At Anaheim 2 – the Breast Cancer Awareness race – Stewart starts to shine.

Stewart starts to simu.

Stewart gets the holeshot in the Main Event and although Villopoto is quickly into second place Stewart is just on it. Through a rhythm section JS's rhythm goes 3-4-4 while everyone else goes 3-3-3 onto a tabletop and then off over the last jump. Villopoto is actually faster through the turns and through most of the track but the rhythm section gains Stewart a slight advantage and the real place Stewart makes up time is in the whoops. Almost every lap Stewart puts a fraction of a second on Villopoto and at the end of the race although Villopoto isn't all that far back it's the most dominant performance of the year so far.

Villopoto finishes second ahead of Chad Reed who

Villopoto finishes second ahead of Chad Reed who grabs his first podium finish of the year. Reed has been working on his bike settings and things are starting to click. Justin Brayton is fourth and Trey Canard is fifth while, outside of Stewart's dominance, the biggest story of the race is defending champion Ryan Dungey's chain derailment early in the Main Event. Dungey scores one point for last place in the Main, losing valuable ground in the championship chase.

"I think I may have caused that," says Trey Canard after the race. "I have nothing but respect for Ryan [Dungey] but we were racing and I hit him in the left rear of the bike only like three turns before his chain came off. I feel horrible."

In the Lites class Josh Hansen has a massive crash in practice and breaks his left hand just above the pinky knuckle in what doctors refer to as a 'boxer's fracture'. Somehow, through pure grit and determination — both words that no-one in their right mind would've used to refer to Hansen in the past — he holds off Eli Tomac, Ken Roczen and Broc Tickle to win the Main Event despite the broken hand. Then, after the race, Hansen finds out he has damaged the fracture further by racing with it and it has to be re-set. But he can't go to the doctor to have it fixed until after the San Diego round which is two weeks away.

In a city named after an American hero called Sam Houston who made a habit of winning battles it's funny that it seems no-one wants to win the Main Event inside Reliant Stadium. Off the very short start and into the very slick first turn James Stewart, Chad Reed, Justin Brayton and much of the rest of the field find themselves on the ground while after a bad start Villopoto tip-toes through in order to stay up through the melee.

So who assumes the lead but Kevin Windham in the closest event he has to a hometown race. Windham begins to pull away in the tricky conditions – as he's prone to do – while Stewart, trying to recover from the first turn crash, lands on Jason Thomas through the track's tricky rhythm section and goes down a second time. This time Stewart damages his brake which causes his front wheel to stop spinning in the air. Smartly, he backs it down for an eventual 15th.

Windham looks to have the race under control out front until an uncharacteristic mistake sees him go down hard in the same rhythm lane that claimed Stewart a little earlier. Windham thinks he may have broken his arm but he definitely hits his head and he's out of the race, handing the lead to Canard who has never won an AMA 450cc Main.

Over the final 10 laps, though, Canard begins riding very tense and with two to go he gets passed by Dungey but he quickly passes Dungey back and puts his head down. Dungey puts in one last charge near the finish and squares the final turn of the race to try and pass Canard but Canard squeezes him down and almost off of the track in order to take his first ever win.

Dungey is second while Ryan Villopoto is third and reassumes the points lead. Davi Millsaps is fourth and Andrew Short scores the first top-five finish for the KTM 350SX-F in fifth as Ken Roczen makes a stunning 450cc debut on his own 350 to finish seventh.

Texas marks the premiere of the 2011 Lites East series and most in the know are talking about the inevitable battle between Justin Barcia and Dean Wilson. The two start out front and in typical Barcia style he begins running it in on Wilson whenever he sees an opportunity and since his reputation precedes him – with good reason – Wilson begins riding tight and eventually gets really bad armpump. Barcia goes on to win the race due to sheer intimidation while Wilson is second and his team-mate Blake Baggett is third.

San Diego can almost be called 'The House That Chad Built' – except that Qualcomm Stadium was built before Reed was born. Regardless, coming into the San Diego





# DONJOY KNEE BRACES AND COMPEX MUSCLE STIMULATORS, AS USED BY ANTONIO CAIROLI - MX1 GP WORLD CHAMPION



Andrew Short keeps coming up just, er, short on KTM's 350

class Josh Hansen has a much vith a two-week-old injury than he did

Former champ James Stewart is having to dig deep in the face of some serious opposition

Supercross, Reed's record as a full-time premier class racer here is 5-2 – that's five wins and two losses. And in the Main Event he shows why.

He grabs the holeshot but he's got Canard – fresh and brimming with confidence from his win in Houston – breathing down his neck. Canard scrubs the track's triple in the on-again, off-again rain and dives underneath Reed to take the lead and then begins to pull away before losing the front end in a tricky right-hander, gifting the lead back to Reed.

And from there Reed is never headed. He pulls away from James Stewart — who inherits second when Canard goes down — and then Canard goes down a second time, putting him in fourth behind Dungey. Stewart stalls his motorcycle, handing second to Dungey and Canard hangs on for fourth. Points leader Ryan Villopoto has a tough Main Event, going down on the opening lap and bending up his motorcycle badly. Still, he catches up to seventh to salvage his points lead and heads into Atlanta with three points to spare over Stewart.

In the Lites class Josh Hansen has a much tougher time with a two-week-old injury than he did with a fresh one. He has trouble holding on and fades in the Main Event from second to sixth but still holds the points lead by three points going into a two-month break from racing for the Lites West. Hansen gets his hand operated on two days after the race so he can be ready for the Lites West to resume when the time comes.

Out front rookie Eli Tomac puts on an absolute clinic. His lead grows every lap until the final lap when he nearly stops he's riding so carefully. He still wins by over 10 seconds over former world champ Tyla Rattray with his best-ever finish and third place goes to Tickle who is the closest to Hansen in the points. Ken Roczen is easily the fastest guy throughout the day and he wins his heat race for the first time in his career but he goes down in the first turn in the Main Event and that's that. He recovers for seventh.

The Atlanta Supercross has long been one of







GRAHAM JARVIS TOUGH ONES LITTLE BROTHER WINNER 2010



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Stewart tries everything but cannot make a pass stick on Reed who has found a lot of extra speed in the past few weeks. As the two head toward the white flag Reed dives under Stewart's team-mate Kyle Regal to put him a lap down and Stewart pounces, diving inside both of them and nearly putting Regal over the top of the berm.

Stewart takes the white flag but less than a half-a-lap later Reed makes his final push, diving to the inside of Stewart to block his line exiting a 180 degree turn and Stewart and Reed collide with both going down

As they lay in the track Ryan Villopoto rides by into the lead and they get up just in front of Ryan Dungey. Inexplicably, over the course of the final lap Stewart goes out of his way to try and knock

both to snatch second place while Reed - livid nearly jumps onto Stewart out of the final turn and takes third place. Stewart is fourth.

However, dropping from second to fourth in the race means that Villopoto just gained an extra four points in the title chase and leaves Atlanta up by 10 points over Stewart going into Daytona – a track that has not been kind to Stewart in the past.

In the Lites class Justin Barcia goes down in practice and fractures the tip of his right ulna but tapes it up and goes racing anyway. Barcia's team-mate Blake Wharton grabs the holeshot from the far outside after having to qualify through the LCQ and then he proceeds to lead the first 11 laps of the 15-lap event. Then he goes down on his own and remounts fourth, handing the lead to Dean Wilson who has just passed his way into second prior to the crash. Barcia inherits second and Baggett again finishes third. It marks Wilson's first-ever supercross victory and the 200th for Mitch Payton's Pro Circuit squad.

Wilson and Barcia are tied on top of the points



Justin Barcia wins the opening Lites East round



### SERIES STANDINGS LITES EAST Ryan Villopoto Josh Hansen James Stewart 161 Broc Tickle Chad Reed 150 Eli Tomac 116 Trey Canard 96 146 Ryan Morais Ryan Dungey 145 Cole Seely 88 Andrew Short 110 83 Ken Roczen Brett Metcalfe 104 80 Tyla Rattray Justin Brayton 90 Martin Davalos 69 Davi Millsaps 88 James Decotis Ivan Tedesco Kyle Cunningham

Dean Wilson

Justin Barcia

Blake Baggett

Blake Wharton

Lance Vincent

Matt Lemoine

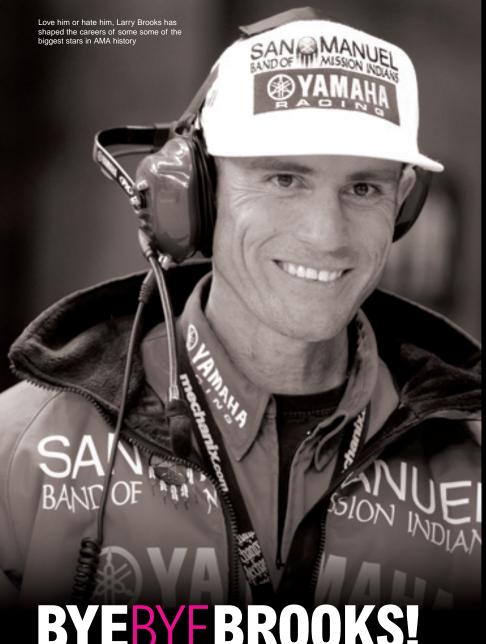
Alex Martin

Jason Anderson

Malcolm Stewart

Ryan Sipes





BYEBYE BROOKS!

WITH LARRY SEEMINGLY HISTORY, HOW COOL IS IT THAT TWO TEAN OWNERS ARE BATTLING IT OUT ON THE TRACK FOR THE WIN?

Words and photos by STEVE COX

here were probably some pretty good reasons why, at least for a while to start the season, James Stewart and Chad Reed started getting along better. They were together as the 'old guys' trying to fend off the young-gun onslaught of defending champ Ryan Dungey, Ryan Villopoto, Trey Canard and the rest. They were the proven talent whose capabilities had come into question after two equally horrible 2010 seasons. And they were both team owners, controlling their own destinies behind the desk as well as behind the handlebars.

Of course, the fact that Stewart was a  $\underline{\text{team}}$ owner wasn't that well-known at the time. In the off-season - when negotiating his deal with the San Manuel Yamaha team - Stewart wasn't finding the kind of income he wanted. So, as I understand it, he brought in some of his own sponsors - namely Red Bull - and essentially used that money to buy out Mike Kranyak, the 'M' in L&M Racing. Stewart controlled 51 per cent of the team at that point but when asked about it earlier in the year he would only say that the rest of the changes to the team structure were still under negotiation so he couldn't say much just yet.

Well, just before Atlanta the rumours really picked up, stating that Stewart had taken over Larry Brooks' portion of the team to become 100 per cent owner. And, sure enough, at Atlanta Brooks was nowhere to be seen. Stewart said Brooks was taking time off for family stuff but everyone else has disagreed with this take. Even Stewart's team-mate Kyle Regal said

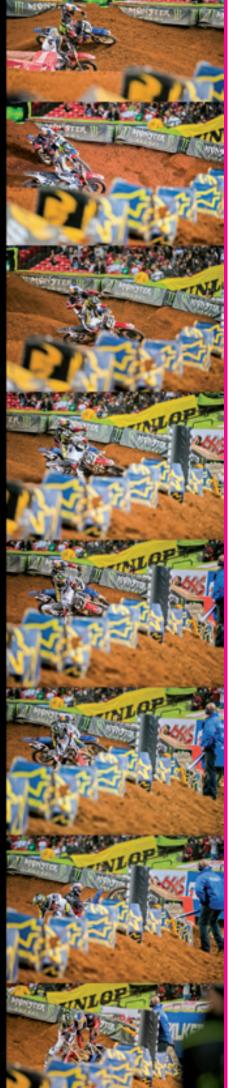
Brooks was out before he apparently knew the party line to toe.

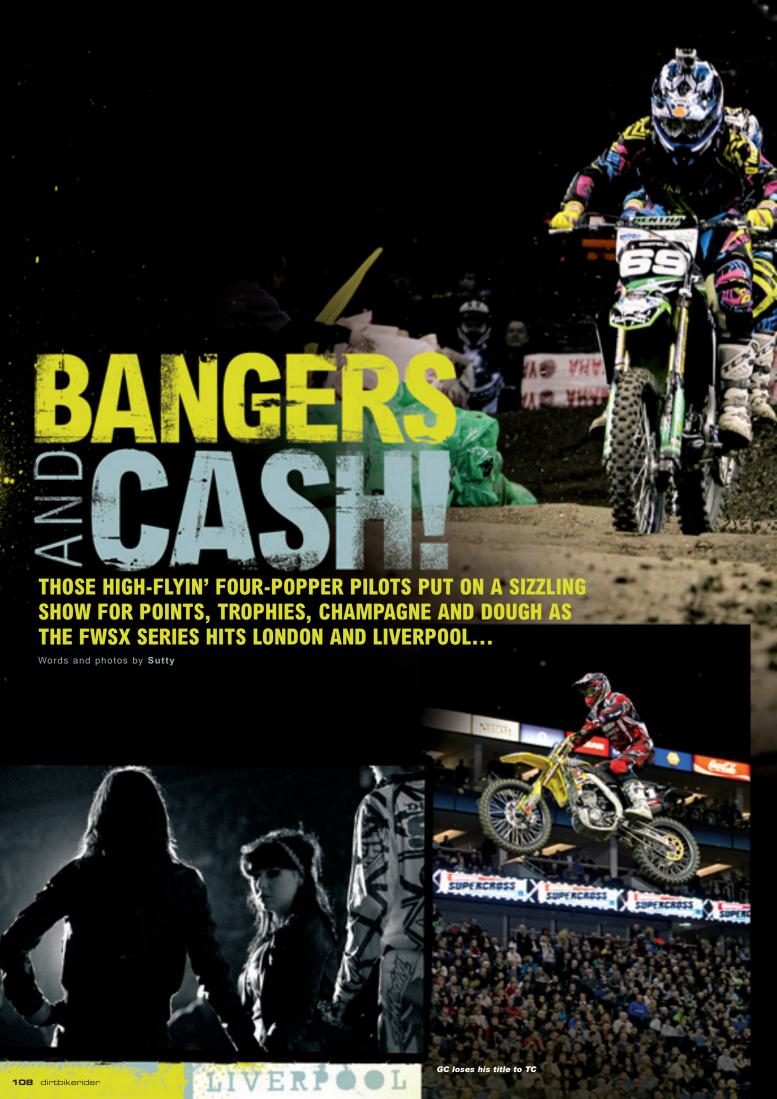
Last year, when working through a disagreement I had with Larry Brooks during my time at Racer X (I'd written about Stewart not talking to the press on the Racer X site and Brooks wanted my blood), I talked it through with Brooks and during the conversation he referred to himself almost with pride as the 'most hated man in the AMA pits'. I don't think that was accurate then – or now – but there are certainly some people who don't like Brooks. That being said, there are some people who definitely don't like me and I think I'm pretty frikkin' awesome so simply saying that some people don't like Brooks doesn't mean it's representative.

On the positive side, Larry Brooks was absolutely the racer's manager. He loved his racers and he backed his racers 100 per cent no matter what the racer did or didn't do. He backed Reed 100 per cent of the time and backed Stewart the same, at least in public. When dealing with the AMA, FIM, media or anything like that, any racer would love to have Brooks in their corner.

We don't know yet what precipitated Brooks' exit from the formerly named L&M (Larry and Mike) Racing team but we do know history. So while James Stewart obviously has full factory Yamaha support and Chad Reed is racing on a bike 99 per cent of which you can buy yourself if you have enough money, how cool is it that two team owners were battling for the win in Atlanta?

The face of racing is changing...







o you remember when foamin' Bob Wright chased down Bob Hannah at the end of the AMA Superbowl of Motocross on his booming B50-engined Bolton-mobile to take the win in front of 50,000 screaming fans? Or that time The Baron stuck it to Marty Tripes inside the LA Coliseum?

The chances are that unless you're on some pretty serious medication right now - like Geoff Walker is - you won't recall either of those things happening and quite rightly so because they never did. Wanna know why? Because CCM don't do supercross and even if they wanted to they never not once had an engine that fit within the realms of the rulebook - not that that fact normally stopped them...

Seriously though, times have changed and the CCM brand as we know it today is in fact now very supercross suitable – well, in the UK at least. Both Buildbase team riders Tom Church and Stephen Sword are excellent indoor racers while the overly-engineered rigid aluminium frame of their CMX450 has a steep steering angle and short wheelbase so - just like TC and Swordy - performs incredibly well in supercross surroundings.

After a festive break the British SX championship resumes in London's O2 Arena and despite only finishing

fourth in the British Open final in Belfast TC starts the second third of the season in the hot seat. But how?

Neither Odyssey winner Martin Barr or runner-up Brad Anderson are committed to the full Future West series and Adam Chatfield pops out a shoulder pulling a pick-up pass on Alex Snow in the head-to-heads so he's a non-starter for London's final too. Which means that the 29-year-old Wiltshireman is suddenly fast-tracked into the virtual series lead.

When the gate drops for the final it's perennial head-to-head hero Ashley Greedy who gets the drop on the pack with TC second ahead of young guns Jack Brunell and Steven Clarke. While Church has his hands full beating back the exuberant SX2 pilots Greedy makes a break for it and pulls out a comfortable lead as the laps wind down to eventually take a solid victory and establish himself as a contender to take the title too. Meanwhile, TC goes back and forth with Brunell for far too long before finally coming out on top in the scrap for second place honours on the night.

With just two points separating Church and Greedy in the British Open title chase tensions are running high headed into the Liverpool finale, especially after some early evening shenanigans starring Greedy and Clarkey that results in the pair getting a right royal

AM DRAM!
ALL THE HIGH-OCTANE DRAMA AND

While the amateur and youth racers aren't fighting it out for huge cash prizes that doesn't stop them from giving 100 per cent in their chase for championship glory.

One young gun who really shines this winter is James Dunn who dominates the Clubman Open class by going three wins for three while also running 2-1-1 in the Youth Lites division to take that title too. A big crash in the O2 during the Clubman Lites Main kills any chances he has of taking that championship which

chances he has of taking that championship which allows Dan Brough to sneak it simply through being ultra consistent all season long – well done that man. The 85cc classes are disappointingly pretty poorly supported this year although the race action is still sublime. Ben Watson takes the Supermini title one round early after dominating in Belfast and London so doesn't turn out for round three in Liverpool while in the SW85cc division Gradie Featherstone goes three for three and even sticks it to the Supermini pilots in the season finale as well. It's hard to say whether that come from behind win over Max Acres is the highlight of his season or the fact that he's the only small-wheeler to jump the finish-line triple in the O2 as both feats coax huge cheers from the massive crowds.

After Dylan Woodcock and Harry Kimber share firsts and seconds at the opening two rounds the scene is set for a winner-takes-all finale. And what a scrap it is as the slightly faster Kimber stuffs up the start, charges through the pack and then crashes after taking over the lead. But it's not over yet as the Twisted 7 teamster picks himself up and closes the gap on Woodcock until on the last lap he's in a position to make an all-or-nothing move.

After launching himself into the side of the Cobra star just two corners from home it's Kimber who has to pick himself up off the dirt as the cool-headed Cobra rider continues on his way to cross the line and in doing so adds the 65cc title to the Auto one he took back in 2009

The class that attracts the biggest numbers is the Autos division and after three hard fought for finals it's Callum Beeken who claims the championship win. Running 2-1-2 through the series, the KTM rider who's spent the winter winning races in Florida edges out Southport's Finley Beard to take the title.

### FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

ubman open		
James Dunn	KTM	75
Mark Perfect	KTM	49
Ryan Williams	KTM	36
UBMAN LITES		
Dan Brough	KTM	64
James Dunn	KTM	61
Luke Norris	Kawasaki	37
UTH LITES		
James Dunn	KTM	72
Mark Perfect	KTM	48
Luke Norris	Kawasaki	44
PERMINI		
Ben Watson	KTM	50
Max Acres	KTM	47
Scooter Webster	KTM	37
cc SW		
Gradie Featherstone	KTM	75
Matt Lomas	Suzuki	53
Mitchell Lewis	Honda	22
CC		
Dylan Woodcock	Cobra	72
Harry Kimber	Kawasaki	69
Connor Ellis	KTM	49
<b>TOS</b>		
Callum Beeken	KTM	69
Finley Beard	KTM	63
	James Dunn Mark Perfect Ryan Williams Dan Brough James Dunn Luke Norris DUTH LITES James Dunn Mark Perfect Luke Norris PERMINI Ben Watson Max Acres Scooter Webster CC SW Gradie Featherstone Mat Lomas Mitchell Lewis CC Dylan Woodcock Harry Kimber Connor Ellis TOS Callum Beeken	James Dunn Mark Perfect Ryan Williams WBMAN LITES Dan Brouph James Dunn Luke Norris WTM Mark Perfect Luke Norris WTM Luke Norris WTM Mark Perfect Luke Norris WTM Scooter Webster CCSW Gradie Featherstone Matt Lomas Mitchell Lewis Mitchell Lewis CCC Dylan Woodcock Harry Kimber Connor Ellis CCIUM CCIUM CCON CCONT

PONDOM NUMBER







### PASS OF THE SERIES? MATT 'BIGFOOT' BAYLISS BLOWIN' BY

So I'm watching some AMA supercross online t'other night and Ralph Sheehan and Fro Daddy are getting all excited about a pass that Chad Reed makes on Andrew Short. Basically, Skippy scrubs his way past Shorty over a triple and powers away, job done! Impressive pass and all but not a patch on the oh-so similar move that Matt Bayliss pulls on Tony Cuddy during a heat race in the O2.

Bayliss - a former Youth and Clubman SX champ - has been super-impressive indoors this year and genuinely looks super-relaxed in the Pro classes as he throws around his CRF250 while running just off the pace of the leaders which is hella impressive considering he hasn't even registered on the majority of most peoples' moto-radars just yet.

Anyway, after catching up Cuddy – who's no slouch either –
Matt scrubs the finishline triple and blows right by Tony who this point can't quite believe he's being undertaken over a 70 foot triple. In fact, it seems like he's still struggling to comprehend what's just happened when he lands because more or less straight away he tucks the front end while braking for the next right-hander and goes down like a sack o' spuds.

So, forget about ramming your competition out of the way or block-passin' them into submission because that's so last season. Apparently, the new way to get ahead is to simply blow by them so quickly that it psyches them out to a level where they topple over.





rollicking from the ACU. It definitely subdues 'em both as an off-form Clarke calls it quits early doors and Greedy takes a sound beating from Snowy in the head-to-heads.

While almost everybody thinks Swordy's only in Liverpool to ride shotgun for his CCM team-mate he says different on the startline when I ask him about it. "Nah, I'm here to win," says the Scotsman coldly before breaking out into a smile. And to punctuate that point the #2 CCM launches off the line and into the lead when the gate drops while TC gets sideswiped by Snowy and very nearly goes down.

Greedy gets away badly n'all and as the pack clears turn two the title contenders are bar-to-bar in the back of the pack - not that they'll stay there for long. While Swordy starts sneaking away from Brunell and Snow, TC bumps n' grinds his way by Greedy,

soon-to-be-dethroned champ Gordon Crockard, two-smokin' Carl Brogden and Chatfield to find himself fourth by mid-race.

Sword, meanwhile, is still way out front with his pre-race prophecy turning out to be true as TC lunges by Snow and baulks Brunell to take second as the laps run down. But with the title in sight Tom runs off the track and gets stuck behind some tuff blocks but luckily he's able to free himself and get back on track in third place as only Chatfield can take advantage of his error. And that's how it all ends - CCM take their first SX Main Event thanks to Swordy and first championship title courtesy of Church in third.

"I'm so pleased to have won it for CCM," says a delighted Church. "I was confident before the race but nearly lost it all when I collided with Snowy off the line. I was able >>



WATSON'S WAY!
MARK WATSON ENDS UP ON TOP IN A THREE-WAY
FOUR-WHEEL FIST-FIGHT TO THE FINISH...

If Mark Watson were able to curb his enthusiasm and keep it on four wheels more often there's no doubt at all that the 25-year-old Cumbrian builder would have won all three rounds of this winter's FWSX series. Luckily for us race fans though the former sidecarcross grand prix passenger makes a real hash of round one in Belfast and can only finish fourth which means he has to attack all out in both the London and Liverpool Main Events if

he's gonna win his first Future West championship title. An easy gate-to-flag win for Watson in the O2 sets up what could be a thrilling championship finale in Liverpool as just three points separate the leading three riders - Northern Ireland's Jonny Kelly heads the pack on 45, fellow Ulsterman Michael McAneney has 44 and Watson's one further back – which means it's a winner-takes-all finale in the Echo Arena.

Brad Frost stirs things up a bit by taking the holeshot on his Yamaha although Watson and his KTM soon bully their way past. Provided he can stay orange side up it's obvious that Mark has the speed to run away from the pack. As the laps run down McAneney and Kelly get stuck into a battle for third which slows them down allowing Frost to keep hold of the runner-up position.

When the chequers is unfurled it's Watson who wins by a quarter lap to take the title n'all while Frost comes home second and McAneney beats Kelly into third - in the race and the final championship standings.



### FINAL SERIES STANDINGS 68 64 63 Mark Watson Michael McAneney KTM Jonny Kelly



to come through strong though and aside from that little bobble near the end had it all under control."

With the British Open title in the bag there's just the small matter of the SX1 crown to tie up before TC's done for the night. With wildcard Evgeny Bobryshev taking honours at round one and equally wild wildcard Shaun Simpson doing the same at round two, by finishing runner-up twice TC has a healthy 15-point championship lead headed into the final round. And with no pressure on he absolutely dominates, running rings around everybody around the ever roughening Dirt Wurx-built Echo Arena circuit to take his first final win and second championship of the night some 21 points clear of runner-up Crockard who edges out Brunell by just one point.

Brunell has his own moment of glory as he captures the Pro SX2 title in an incredible manner. With initial series leader Chatfield putting himself out of the London Main Events Brunell only has to ride consistently to sit on a comfortable

lead heading into the finale but the racer in him takes over and he buries himself in the whoops while leading the final which is eventually won by Mike Brown.

With Brunell only scoring 11 points for his 10th place finish Ash Greedy and MVR-D Honda's Nev Bradshaw share the series lead on 35 points while Brunell slides back to third on 33 - eight clear of Chatfield who could still feasibly win the whole shebang if he returns with a bang in Liverpool.

Between races Bradshaw retires from the series with a hand injury meaning it's a winner-takes-all battle for first between Brunell on the Rabbit Racing Kawasaki and Greedy on the similarly green Maxxis Henderson LPE machine.

The decider's actually a little on the dull side as Brunell rides the race of his life, yanking the holey then running 15 perfect laps to take a deserved win ahead of Greedy who's unable to get anywhere close enough to dish out his usual kind of no-holds-barred, testosterone-fuelled overtaking manoeuvre.

### FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

### BRITISH OPEN

2007 title

	iom Cnurch
2	Ashley Greedy
2	lack Brunell

PRO SX1 Tom Church Gordon Crockard

### Jack Brunell PRO SX2

1	.lack	Brune	e//

2	Asniey	Greeay
2	Adami	Chatfiel

Buildbase CCM	60
Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki	53
Rabbit Racing Kawasaki	45
D !! !!	00

48 47 TAS Suzuki Rabbit Racing Kawasaki

Rabbit Racing Kawasaki Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki 57 Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki





# TONUS AND DESALLE KICK OFF 2011 ON TOP IN FRANCE AS THE MX WORLD GETS AN EARLY GLIMPSE OF WHO'S DONE WHAT OVER THE WINTER...



common practice ground before the start of the various national championships sprinkled around Europe, the pre-season internationals are a good way for teams and riders to measure themselves against their main opponents and check who's done their homework during the winter.

Valence in France is one of the preferred events for the world championship's top teams to present their new bikes, sponsors, riders, staff, trucks, kit, girlfriends and other gadgets. Having said that, one of the main absentees this year is the Red Bull Teka KTM team who are doing their traditional photoshoot in the south of Spain although team representative and current world WMX champion Steffi Laier shows up for another battle with her arch-rival Livia Lancelot who's now back on the Kawasaki under the Bud Racing team awning.

Also missing is the Yamaha Monster Energy team which opts to race the Mantova Starcross International in Italy held on the same weekend. Even so, Steven Frossard – one of the team's MX1 riders – is at the gate for his debut on a 450 and the talented Frenchman is the fastest in Saturday's practice.

British interest is knocked back a couple of notches by the double DNS from the CLS Monster Energy Kawasaki Pro Circuit team – aka Max Anstie and Tommy Searle. Both Brits are initially entered but their ultra-prepped 250Fs aren't, er, ultra-prepped in time. While we're on the subject of the Brits, the weather can't be more like at home with rain from Saturday night up until Sunday lunchtime leaving track conditions looking kinda familiar.

Proppa.com KTM and DB Honda Racing come back from winter shakedown testing in Spain to race Valence and Elliott Banks-Browne's looking super-sharp, holeshoting the second moto and leading the entire field for a couple of laps. Elliott eventually finishes fifth overall and his new team-mate James Cottrell cards 11th.

The surprise 'Brit' is MVR-D Honda's Matiss Karro who has

a solid ride, finishing third overall right behind Nicolas Aubin and the new UK import Arnaud Tonus on the Bike it Cosworth Wild Wolf Yamaha. This year Aubin's following Mickael Pichon's advice in his last chance to show what he's capable of in the MX2 class. The French and Swiss riders battle practically all Sunday with both winning a moto each although it's Tonus who ends up winning the MX2 overall after Aubin suffers a technical problem during the super final. Euro 125cc champion Jordi Tixier finishes in fourth.

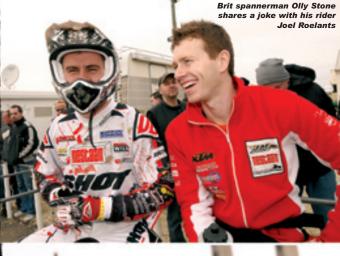
World vice-champ Clement Desalle claims both MX1 races but is denied a triple in the super final when a stone gets in the rear brake of his RM-Z450 and causes him to slip off. Looking good on his new YZ450FM, Frossard ends the day in second ahead of a revived Sebastien Pourcel who is involved in some exciting battles for the podium.

It's clear to see in Valence that a couple of ex-factory KTM riders are looking much more relaxed on their new red machinery, especially LS Motors Honda's Shaun Simpson who has three consistent motos to secure fourth position in the overall results. Rui Goncalves – riding alongside Evgeny Bobryshev in the Honda World Motocross team – looks like he's still working on set-up and both he and his Russian team-mate spend much of the weekend deep in discussion with Japanese technicians.

KRT Kawasaki's Xavier Boog is out of luck again and goes home with a fractured tibia and Proppa.com's Nathan Parker is lucky to escape injury when he crashes hard. Nez and new team-mate Martin Barr look in no rush to hang it out around the slippery French circuit and finish 24th and 25th overall.

Among the British riders and teams in the paddock is ex-CCM racing mechanic Olly Stone who's decided to follow his dream of becoming a truly international spanner spinner and is now Joel Roelants' mechanic at the Martens KTM team. Olly doesn't mince words. "Bring me DBRs and send me some pictures..." Well Olly, seeing as you asked so nicely...













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### EFIGHTERS!

WITH FIVE TOP SERIES TO GO FOR, RAGE PREVIEWS THE BIG HITTERS IN THE YOUTH DIVISION...

ith the youth national cork just about to go pop simultaneously this weekend - March 12/13 - at both Brampton and Mallory it's time for a last-gasp, scratch your head preview once again.

As usual the youth competition choices on offer are staggering - BYMX, EYC, BSMA Wulfsport Masters and Maxxis MXY2 - and looking across the board at all championships the venues are also absolute choice picks with the likes of Desertmartin, Canada Heights, Hawkstone Park, Lyng, Foxhill, Wakes Colne, Whitby and Landrake on offer.

Digging down into the various rider entry lists it's plain to see that the MCF and the BSMA have sold their big idea particularly well and they are both rewarded with a full order book of youth talent.

The BSMA have also introduced an Auto class where eight-year-old Sam Davis from Stourport on Severn could well be the top tip along with fellow West Midlander Lewis Pyne. Also watch out for young Robbie Scott together with James Hyett, Jack Scally and Toby Potter.

Moving on to the 65s and what a prospect with no absolute nailed-on favourites as in past years, just endless options for the moto win. Once again taking a shufti right across the board you can expect quality winning shows from Alexander Brown, Jed Etchells, Harry Kimber, Owen Woodhouse, Jack Booker and Dylan

Woodcock. And very hot on their heels are Jaydon Murphy, Oliver Costerdine, Josh Greedy, Charlie Kent, Harry Wichman, Christopher Mills, Rossi Beard, Matthew Pocock, Archie Osmaston and Jordan Hearn.

Trying to pick the ultimate champions from that lot ain't easy but for me it should be either Manxman Etchells or Scotsman Brown in BYMX, Brown, Kimber or Woodhouse in the EYC and Booker, Kimber or possibly young Kenty in the BSMA.

In the 85cc smallies division KTM-mounted Conrad Mewse and Sid Evans on the Twisted 7 Kawasaki bash plastics again. It's a repeat of the '09 classic 65s battle and could turn into the highlight of the racing year but only on BYMX days however as Conrad bolts in the Big Wheels for the EYC and BSMA gig. Sid sticks with the small set season-long and a winning double or even treble ain't out of the question.

If you're looking for a quality challenge in the division Henry Williams is really good to go right now together with the second member of the Twisted 7 SW squad, David Keet. Jordan Eccles is also sure to be in and around the podium chase as are a gaggle of last year's upgrades headed by Albie Wilkie, Keenan Hird and Taylor Hammal. The prediction for this one? If you can get the better of either Mewse or Evans you definitely have a future in the sport.

It's stating the plainly obvious I know but

Ben Watson really is a hot favourite in 2011. The hottest of the hot in fact as the 85cc BW section looks a tad light in comparison to recent years. Watson will be itching to put last year's mechanical ill-fortunes well behind him and he goes again on the HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK machine. Maximum grief for Watson? Most likely in the shape of the Honda 150F crew led by Rob Davidson, Jack Gardner and Oli Osmaston. The two-stroke challenge? His best mucka Tom Neal, Liam Knight and Jack Eldridge. Also keep your eyes on Matty Callaghan, Josh Gilbert, Curtis Blamey and Fraser Viner.

Looking in the crystal ball a Watson double

pokes me in the eye straight away - if he doesn't have Euro date clashes - with Gardner, Knight and Blamey carving up the glory on BSMA and Wulfsport Masters days.

Ex big-wheelers moving up to trade heavier punches in the various 125cc smoker classes this year include Ben Howell. Sam Winterburn. Jordan Godwin, Connor Clark and Husqvarna-mounted Corie Southwood. Expect quality sparks to fly whenever they all get together with the BSMA clash looking well tasty. On BYMX and RBPN weekends youth are up against seasoned adults but Howell looks in good shape for the BSMA silverware.

Ryan Houghton on the HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK bike along with Bradley Pocock, Jamie McCanney, Nathan Watson, Jordan Divall,

Lewis Pvne

James Dunn, Dan Thornhill and Jake Shipton begin the year as my top picks for ultimate glory across the different codes in the Open class. Houghton will be attempting to repeat Connor Walkley's BYMX/Maxxis MXY2 winning double of last term - and I think he will – but if Pocock, Watson and McCanney all bring their A game it will be a classic season.

Along with the already mentioned you can add the names of Liam Garland and Adam Sterry as possible heat winners with the ACU and EYC championships looking equally strong. Having said that there is even more talent with the likes of young Irishman Conor Campbell, Twisted 7's James Harrison, Jack Kelly, Robbie Muscat, Jake Millward, Luke Newman, Damon Brooks and Ryan McClean in the combined mix.

In the BSMA MXY2 championship look out for a tidy scrap at the sharp end featuring Divall, Jay Thomas and this winter's 14-year-old sensation Tommy Alba. Across in the Wulfsport Masters MXY2 series it could well turn out to be a re-run of last year's competition with reigning champion Dan Thornhill going bar to bar with James Dunn. This time around however both guys are KTM-mounted. The main Suzuki challenge will come from Luke Dean with Jay Thomas,

Jordan Godwin, Adam Darbyshire and Damon

Wales producing the extra Wulfsport oomph.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

RYANHOUGHTON

t's all set up to be a very important year for Ryan Houghton who began and finished last term looking very much like the real deal at Leuchars and Cusses Gorse in the BYMX Youth Open section. The bit in the middle however following the broken bones suffered at Norley proved to be a frustrating time.

This year will be his final fling in youth competition and Houghton will be looking to add to his '09 BW title success, peaking with a repeat of Connor Walkley's ACU double of last vear - BYMX and MXY2. And he's also launching himself head-long into the full-on world of pro racing on RBPN days.

As a family the Houghtons are professional in all they do - and the new deal for 2011 sees them switch from Danger UK over to Red Bull KTM UK with the HM Plant team.

So with the championship season just about to kick into life Rage asked Ryan to reflect on matters MX...

Rage: It seemed at the back end of 2010 you had a difficult but also exciting and pleasant set of decisions to make for 2011 - following much consideration what persuaded you to plump for HM Plant Red Bull KTM UK?

Ryan: "I was in a very fortunate position and had several quality offers on the table from different manufacturers. But my heart is with KTM and it all fell into place with HM Plant. Sometimes things are just meant to be. I had been with Danger UK for two years and Percy has been absolutely fantastic and I would like to thank him but I feel this is the time to move on and another door is opening."

Rage: It's early days right now but what's the best thing so far about the new team? Ryan: "Gotta say the best thing so far is the new bike and getting to be around riders of the quality of Jake Nicholls for a team training

session. It's amazing how much I can learn from them. Jake and I have become good friends and he has helped me. We hook up for riding whenever possible."

Rage: How often do you get to be a part of the full KTM team training session?

Ryan: "As a youth satellite rider to the main team it's just as and when it all fits in with their worldwide travel arrangements really - but there should be a few good sessions at regular intervals throughout the year."

Rage: You mentioned the bike earlier - is it pretty much a stock machine with a few special bits bolted on?

Ryan: "The main race machine for this year is an ex-Jake bike from last year. Apart from the changed suspension it's pretty much as Jake rode it. The plan at the moment is to alternate between that bike and another race bike."

Rage: Horses for courses then? Ryan: "Yeah that's the plan - mix and match see how it all pans out."

Rage: "Talking of plans for the year Ryan, the racing schedule looks well busy with BYMX, MXY2 and Red Bull Pro Nationals on the agenda. What are your thoughts on pro racing? Ryan: "Yeah for sure a whole new big challenge. It's going to be tough I know but at the same time I'm looking forward to it - I'm dipping my toe in the water at the Red Bull Pro meetings to get a taste for riding with some top guys. I had a feel of it at last year's MX323 round at Blaxhall and it was awesome, can't wait to get out there again - chasing down some big reputations will be fun. I will see how the year goes but I would also like to do a couple of rounds in the Dutch ONK to get a bit of European experience too."





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### JACKATTACK!

ooking back at a few of the previous years' BW85cc championships it's almost the norm to find riders who surge up the rankings to ultimately grab a slice of the season's glory.

Think back to Sam Davis and Richie Worrall in '07, Brad Pocock in '08, Nathan Watson in '09 and, of course, Adam Sterry last year. All of them either over-turned strong pre-season favourites or went very close to doing so. This year Ben Watson begins as the absolute top tip but make no mistake the challenge will be full-on again this year, just as it was last term.

One other item to note with that list of guys apart from Worrall - the use of the awesome Honda 150F powerplant. Jack Gardner is no stranger to the F power and has been one of those youth riders who have upgraded early throughout his career. This has kept him under the radar but you can expect him to fully break cover with a bang in 2011.

Jack has been high-profile this winter with club class wins just about everywhere so Rage decided to have a word...

Rage: Hi Jack, can you tell Rage how you got into the sport?

Jack: "There's a long family tradition in MX. My grandpa raced in the '40s and '50s, he was a member of the Royal Signals team with Brian Leask among others. Dad also raced in the '70s and '80s being a top AMCA racer and he has been long-time friends with the Harrison brothers, Paul and Steve, who were both top racers back in the day. I started messing around on a bike at three in the back garden and racing began



Hometown: Northampton Bike: MX World Honda Height: 5ft 7in Weight: 9st

Fave pro: Ken Roczen Fave youth rider: Adam Sterry Food and drink: Spag bol and Lucozade Sport

Best mates in the paddock: Matt Harrison, Alex Meadows, Rob Davidson, Matty Callaghan, Connor Clark, Tom Neal.

Fave three national tracks: Whitby, Hawkstone Park, Dean Moor

Best school subject: PE Worst school subject: English Best thing about MX: Winning Worst thing about MX: Having to wait a full week to race again Full list of sponsors: MX World, Lee Goldsmith, Cosworth, Scott, Maxima,

Acerbis, Dunlop, HGS, Vortex, Hammerhead, Splitscreen, Lightspeed, NGK, DID and Renthal

with the Cotswold club at six."

Rage: Looking back down the years Jack what have been the racing high points? Jack: "I have won Auto and 65cc championships with the Cotswold club and an another 65cc title at the Northampton club. In 2006 I was a member of the Hanson Racing team with Alfie Smith and Scott Elderfield. My best finishes that year were a second place at BYMX Matchams in the final race and I took a win at Culham. As soon as the 150F came to the market I switched from KTM. The first year was all about getting used to the bike then I moved straight into BWs in '08. In '09 I finished third in the BSMA championships and won the BSMA finals last year."

Rage: How are the final preps going for this year? And what's going to be the main championship focus?

Jack: "This is my fifth year on the Honda and I feel so at home with it now. Jason and the team at MX World have built me the ultimate machine for this year - the fastest I've ever ridden - and following a bit of testing I just can't wait for the big kick-off. BYMX and EYC are the two main aims, we have also entered BSMA and Masters and I will race there when there are no date clashes."

Rage: Finally Jack, a bit of fun with this one if you could dream up your fantasy photo for a centre page magazine spread what would it be?

Jack: "Definitely me in that one at the St Jean D'Angely MXdN jumping the uphill triple passing Ken Roczen on the way!"

### KINGPINI

ast month we interviewed Harry Kimber who we think will be one of the favourites for the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup 65cc class and this month we've having a look at the SW85cc class.

There are a few guys capable of winning races in this class with the likes of new kids on the block Keenan Hird, Ryan Vickers and Taylor Hammal all moving up from the 65cc class to trade blows with second season runners such as David Keet. And there's another young rider who's been making great strides over the winter months and could be set for good things in 2011 and that's Billy King.

Billy's been working hard over the winter and earning himself some well-deserved results. He got off to a flying start recently at the SSMXC championship opener where, on a wet and muddy track, he won the overall in a combined 85cc class showing all the big wheel boys how it's done. We spoke with Billy and his dad Paul about his preparations for this year and what he's been doing differently and this is what they had to say...

Billy has always been fast but struggled to break the top 10 last year - what was the main reason for this?

Paul: "Billy struggled with getting good starts last year and as a result had to work his way through the pack. In the lower classes this wasn't so much of an issue but with the level of competition in the 85cc class you need to get good starts.

Rage: So what have you been doing to improve your starts for 2011?

Billy: "I've been working hard on how to position myself better and I have been training hard by doing boxing training which should make me stronger going into the first turn."

e: What else have you been doing in the winter to help prepare for the 2011 championship?

Billy: "Well I have been riding a lot and luckily I get to practice at Somerset practice track regularly. I have been working on my fitness. I also spend as much time riding my BMX or motocross bike as possible. I don't know why but I love riding in mud which has helped my bike skills."

What are your goals for this year? Billy: "I would like to finish regularly in the top 10 for 2011 and be as near to the front as possible."





### RUNNINGHO

### IT'S IN THE MID-30s DOWN UNDER WHERE BILLY'S SWEATING OUT

### THE LAPS SO HE CAN COME OUT FIGHTING FOR THE NATIONALS...

ebruary has been wide open and blisteringly hot! Riding has been tough in the heat but when you see the improvements each day it makes you keep working – it's tough though, sometimes the heat gets up to the mid 30s out in the desert. Regular trips to the chemist for glucose and electrolyte powders are a must, otherwise you can lose three or four kilos in weight just from sweating.

Today I woke up after a gruelling day's riding and was 79kg, the lowest I've ever been! I didn't know how to take it at first - normally I'm up around 84kg which is like my 'safe' weight. I never really go over or below that weight, it's always around the same, so when I saw 79kg on the scales I had to ask myself a few questions. 'Do I feel good?' Yes! 'Is training okay?' Yes! 'Can I complete the motos without feeling too tired?' Yes!

That's all I really care about at the moment and if those things still continue to go well then there's no reason to question anything just crack on and keep doing what I'm doing. I feel lighter and stronger than I did last year and on the bike I can feel within me that I can push harder for longer.

Riding has been going really good this month and I've been building my minutes up each day and practising the sprint formats for the first round. The sprint formats are pretty hard in the heat and it's horrible sitting there in your sweaty gear waiting for the five minutes in between to be up. I've also been doing 35-minute motos so when I do the sprints when I hit the 15-minute mark it feels like I'm just getting into it and working the track out only to be stopped mid-session!

Keith has hit terra firma back in the UK now after doing a week's stint with Johnny Rea down in Philip Island doing his manfriend thang although he's not really a manfriend, more a manforce! He just carries the force with him all the time. I also got to catch up with my old training buddy Leon Haslam and Kirk while they were over here the weeks leading up to the race. It was great to see everyone as I was starting to miss home a little. So I've had quite a lot of company the past couple months and it's now back to H and me in our cosy little love shack which is pretty nice and relaxing!

I got whisked off on a little Valentine weekend away too which is always a welcome break. Australia is so easy for holidays - nice weather, nice beaches, you can literally have a holiday any weekend within a two-hour drive.

So we hit the beach and had a little holiday home right near the water, enjoyed some red wine and good food with gorgeous sunshine and clear blue seas!

We recently had the launch of the 2011 MX nationals down in Sydney. It's a pretty cool thing to do for the series - all the teams rock up and have a test on one of the national tracks. We all do our thing to promote the series and get to test our bikes, catch up with everyone and have a good time. There was a BBQ, a freshly watered track, all the TV and press guys were there so we did some fun interviews and checked out all the new rigs and bikes. It was a good thing to be part of. You can check out the videos on YouTube if you search out the links.

We have a brand new set-up for this year as I may have mentioned before. We're the full Monster Energy Kawasaki team here in Oz and our graphics and posters etc are so much cooler than last year's. We're using the same design as the factory Kawasaki bike in the States and the new semi truck is fully wrapped in the Monster Kawasaki colours and looks so cool! It makes me excited to be a part of everything and I can see the team growing each week with the work Troy and the mechanics are doing.

We have loads of great sponsors coming on and I get on real well with my new team-mates. We have a new MX2 guy called Phil Nicoletti who is cool. He's been in the States riding with Zach and Jas before he come over so it was fun to swap stories with him and find out how Jas has been getting on. Dean I already know from last year and he's a cool guy and a hard worker - I'm sure he's gonna be fast this year.

Guys, I'm really sorry there's not a lot to talk about. I haven't really had anything funny or weird happen to me this month - it's been all work and no play! The only things that come to mind are the things I've been doing round the house! While Harriet is at work and I'm left at home I find myself feeling a bit house proud and being a proper little house husband. I always have the Hoover out and always do the washing!

Hope you are all good back home, I'm really looking forward to racing the British GP in August! I need to try and contain the excitement -

there's really nothing like riding a British GP!









